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Wayne Madsen named Italy T20 World captain



Gruhalakshmi scheme row: Ashoka alleges women were cheated

BELAGAVI

After the Congress-led Karnataka government admitted in the Legislative Assembly that there was a lapse in disbursing Gruhalakshmi scheme installments, Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka alleged that nearly ₹5,000 crore would have gone undetected had the BJP not raised the issue.

Speaking to reporters after staging a walkout from the Assembly, Ashoka questioned Women and Child Welfare Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar, asking why women beneficiaries were

"cheated." He said people of the state, especially the poor, were waiting for Gruha Laxmi payments and ration supplies, but the government had disappointed them.

Ashoka demanded immediate crediting of the pending amounts to beneficiaries' accounts. He alleged that funds were not released to 10 districts and claimed officials at district offices were threatened and instructed not to share information. Accusing the government of attempting to "swallow" ₹5,000 crore, he asked whether it was a "government of loot."



The poor wait for the Gruha Laxmi money and for their ration. But the government has poured cold water on their hopes.

—R. Ashoka, Oppn Leader

Hebbalkar admits two months' Gruhalakshmi payments pending

BELAGAVI: Women and Child Development Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar on Wednesday acknowledged that payments under the Gruhalakshmi scheme are pending for two months and expressed regret that her earlier statement in the Assembly was incorrect. She said a review revealed that two months' assistance remains unpaid in the 2024–25 financial year. Hebbalkar assured the House that the reasons for the delay would be examined and corrected soon. If her statement had caused confusion, she said, she sincerely regretted it.

LS passes SHANTI Bill amid Oppn walk out

Union minister Jitendra Singh termed the SHANTI Bill a "milestone legislation" that will give a new direction to the country's developmental journey in atomic energy

NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday approved the "Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025" during the Winter Session, amid an opposition walkout. Introduced by MoS for the Department of Atomic Energy Jitendra Singh on Monday, the amended bill marks a significant policy shift by permitting private sector participation in India's nuclear industry, previously reserved for government enterprises.

Singh highlighted that the



legislation establishes a pragmatic civil liability regime for nuclear damage and grants statutory status to the Atomic En-

ergy Regulatory Board. The law aims to boost nuclear energy production and its applications across sectors, supporting India's goal of achieving 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047. The bill introduces updated regulatory provisions, including enhanced safety protocols, a specialised nuclear tribunal for dispute resolution, and modifications to the nuclear liability framework to reduce risks and encourage investment.

Under the legislation, private companies and joint ven-

The Opposition contended that the Bill diluted provisions of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 that passed on the liability for a nuclear incident on to the suppliers of nuclear equipment.

RS approves 100% FDI in insurance sector

NEW DELHI: The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025, raising the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector from 74% to 100%. The reform aims to expand insurance coverage to all citizens by 2047, attract greater global investment, and facilitate mergers between insurance and non-insurance companies.

tures can seek authorisation to establish and operate nuclear facilities and transport nuclear fuel. However, critical operations such as uranium enrichment, spent fuel management, and heavy water pro-

duction will remain under central government control. The government will continue overseeing radioactive materials and radiation-producing equipment to ensure strict safety compliance.

MGNREGA name change: CM, DCM lead protests

BELAGAVI

The ruling Congress in Karnataka on Wednesday staged a protest against the Centre's move to replace the existing rural employment law MGNREGA, challenging the BJP to remove the picture of Mahatma Gandhi from currency notes as well. The agitation led by chief minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar in front of the Gandhi statue at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha also protested the alleged "hate



politics" against the party leadership in the National Herald case.

Siddaramaiah accused BJP of engaging in renaming exercises instead of fo-

cusing on work to benefit the poor. Meanwhile, Shivakumar challenged the BJP to change Mahatma Gandhi's photo on the rupee note. "Replacing MGNREGA is a national problem. We have got MGNREGA through constitution. It is a Constitution amendment. You can't change a constitution amendment. If BJP has guts let it change Gandhi's photo in the Rupee note. Let us see. We will take up the issue in the assembly," he told reporters.

Return '51 cartons of Nehru papers': Centre attacks Sonia Gandhi

NEW DELHI: The Centre on Wednesday renewed its demand for the return of 51 cartons of Jawaharlal Nehru's papers taken from the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML) in 2008, asserting that such records belong in public archives and not in private custody. Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat clarified that the papers are not "missing," as their transfer to Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was formally recorded and their location is known. Shekhawat said the documents form part of India's national documentary heritage and must be accessible to scholars, citizens and Parliament for an objective understanding of Nehruvian history. He questioned why the papers have not been returned despite repeated reminders from PMML.

More on page 7



Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister



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Government of Karnataka

Prabhuling Kavalikatti, IAS
Director, Directorate of Municipal Administration
Urban Development Department
Government of Karnataka



Protecting public property and refraining from violence A constitutional fundamental duty of every Indian

QUICK READ

**Tragic Accident
Claims Life of
Toddler in Udupi****Udupi**

A heartbreaking incident occurred in Udupi's Kinnimulki area on Monday, claiming the life of a one-and-a-half-year-old girl. The toddler, Kirthana, fell into a well while her mother, Nayana, was drawing water near their home. Despite the mother's quick response and rescue efforts, the child succumbed to the accident. According to police reports, Nayana was holding Kirthana when the toddler slipped from her arms and fell into the well. The mother bravely descended into the well with the help of a rope and retrieved the child, only to find her deceased. PSI Bharatesh Kankanawadi of the Udupi Town police station visited the scene and conducted an inspection. Further details are awaited. This incident serves as a reminder of the importance of ensuring child safety.

**Hoax Bomb Threat
Emails Spark Panic in
Karnataka Govt Offices****Karwar**

A wave of hoax bomb threat emails sent to government offices in Karnataka triggered panic on Tuesday. The tahsildar offices in Karwar and Bhatkal, along with the Deputy Commissioner's office in Tumakuru, received emails claiming "revenge from Tamilians and Pakistanis" and warning of an imminent bomb explosion. Authorities swiftly deployed police personnel, bomb disposal squads, and dog squads to the locations. After thorough searches, no explosives were found, confirming the threats were a hoax. Uttara Kannada Superintendent of Police Deepan M.N. stated that investigations are underway to trace the sender. Similar hoax threats have been reported across Karnataka in recent days, with offices in Bidar, Kolar, Gadag, Mangaluru, Davanagere, and Vijayapura receiving emails.

**Theyyam ritual turns
violent, youth injured
at Kasaragod temple****Kasaragod**

A shocking incident occurred during a temple festival in Kasaragod district, where a youth was injured after being struck by a shield used by a Theyyam performer. The disturbing video of the incident has gone viral on social media, sparking widespread concern. The incident took place at the Shree Vishnumurthy temple in Pallikkara, near Nileshwar, during the Poomaruthandaiva ritual. The youth, identified as Manu, a resident of Nileshwar, was reportedly hit by the nartaka and fell to the ground. He was immediately rushed to a hospital for treatment. The visuals of the incident show the Theyyam performer wielding a shield, which accidentally struck Manu, causing him to lose his balance.

Furniture Shortage Delays Shift to New RTO Office in Sirsi

The RTO office serves the districts of Sirsi, Siddapur, Yellapur, and Mundgod, and hundreds of vehicle owners and drivers visit the office daily for various services

KARWAR

The newly constructed Regional Transport Office (RTO) building in Sirsi, Karnataka, remains unoccupied due to a lack of furniture, eight months after its inauguration. The building, constructed at a cost of crores of rupees, was expected to provide better facilities for the public and officials.

The RTO office serves the districts of Sirsi, Siddapur, Yellapur, and Mundgod, and hundreds of vehicle owners and drivers visit the office daily for various services. However, the office continues



to operate from a rented building, causing inconvenience to the public.

According to officials, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) was supposed to provide furniture for the new building,

but despite repeated requests, the process has not been completed. "We are under pressure from our superiors, and the public is also questioning us about the delay," said an RTO official.

Local resident Akshay

Shetty urged authorities to expedite the process, stating, "The new building is ready, but it's a shame that it's not being used due to a lack of furniture. We request the authorities to look into this matter and start the office as soon as possible."

The new RTO building was inaugurated on March 29, 2025, by Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, but it has remained unused due to the furniture shortage. Officials are now considering using the existing furniture from the old building to occupy the new premises soon.



Kasaragod Sub-Inspector transferred to cybercrime unit over fabricated juvenile case

KASARAGOD

A Vidyannagar Sub-Inspector, Anoop S, has been transferred to the Kasaragod Cyber Crime Police Station after being caught on CCTV fabricating a juvenile driving case. The transfer order is pending formal issuance, following a report submitted by the Special Branch Deputy Superintendent of Police to District Police Chief B V Vijaya Bharat Reddy.

The incident occurred on December 7, when a 19-year-old BPharm student, Majida, and her 16-year-old brother were stopped by police near Cherkala. Majida was riding the scooter, but police accused her brother of driving recklessly and carelessly. Despite CCTV footage contradicting the police version, the Vidyannagar police refused to withdraw the case, prompting Majida to approach the District Police Chief.

An inquiry revealed that SI Anoop had fabricated the

The incident occurred on December 7, when a 19-year-old BPharm student, Majida, and her 16-year-old brother were stopped by police near Cherkala. Majida was riding the scooter, but police accused her brother of driving recklessly and carelessly

case, and he has now been transferred to the Cyber Crime Police Station. The relatively mild punishment is attributed to Anoop's previous transfer from Kozhikode and the fact that his "intent was not bad".

Majida was booked under Section 125 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 199A(2) of the Motor Vehicles Act, facing fines and imprisonment. Her family had planned to approach the High Court seeking compensation for police harassment but has not yet decided on the matter.

Coastal Festival in Full Swing: ₹6 Cr Funding Assured, Says Minister

KARWAR

The Coastal Festival, a vibrant celebration of culture and entertainment, is set to take place from December 22 to 28 in Tagore Beach, Karwar. Minister Mankala Vaidya has urged officials to expedite preparations, ensuring a grand success.

The festival has received a boost with Chief Minister's assurance of ₹6 crore funding - ₹1 crore from the Coastal Development Authority and ₹5 crore from the Kannada and Culture Department.

District Commissioner K. Lakshmi Priya announced the star-studded lineup: Shankar Mahadevan (Dec 22), Mika

THE FESTIVAL PROMISES A DIVERSE RANGE OF EVENTS, INCLUDING:
■ Rangoli and Cooking Competitions (Dec 24)
■ Marathon and Coastal Run (Dec 25)
■ Tug of War, Kids' Art Competition, and Wall Painting (Dec 26)
■ Dog Show (Dec 27)

Singh (Dec 23), Sonu Nigam (Dec 24), Raftaar (Dec 25), Mohammed Danish (Dec 27), and Daler Mehndi (Dec 28). Local artists will also get a chance to showcase their talents from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm daily. Officials from various de-

partments, including District Panchayat CEO Dr. Dilish Shashi and District Police Superintendent Deepan M.N., attended the virtual meeting, emphasizing the government's commitment to making this festival a grand success.

Village-urban ties crucial for development: Commissioner Komar

KARWAR

Gujarat's Police Commissioner Narasimha Komar emphasized the need for closer village-urban relationships, saying, "The connection between rural and urban life must be strengthened. Achieving harmony between villages and cities should be our primary focus."

Komar was speaking at a seminar titled "Gram Sangram-Sandhan" held at Adike Bhavan in Yellapura, where he highlighted the inevitability of change and the importance of adapting to it. "Change is inevitable, whether we like it or not. We must accept this reality and work towards progress and development where we stand," he said.

Literary figure Sridhar Baligar stressed the impor-

ance of loving rural life, saying, "When there's love, there's patience. When love fades, intolerance sets in. We must cherish rural living."

The event featured discussions on preserving rural culture and promoting harmony between villages and cities. M.N. Hegde, a renowned artist, urged city-dwelling villagers to maintain strong ties with their roots, visiting their ancestral homes during festivals and celebrations.

The seminar was attended by notable personalities, including Subbayya Dogale, M.R. Hegde, Murali Hegde, and D.N. Gaunkar. Komar, a 1996-batch IPS officer, has served in various capacities, including as Chairman of the Task Force on the 'VISWAS' Project, overseeing the implementation of advanced surveillance technology in Gujarat.



Polio Vaccination Drive Targets 1.04 Lakh Children in District

KARWAR

A polio vaccination campaign is underway in Karwar district, aiming to immunize 1,04,581 children under five years old. The drive, which began on December 21, will run until December 24, with 878 vaccination centers set up across the district.

Additional District Commissioner Sajid Mulla urged health workers to ensure no child is left out, particularly those from migrant families, construction workers, and slum areas. He also instructed

**The vaccination
schedule includes:**

- December 21: Vaccination at designated centers
- December 22-23: Door-to-door vaccination in rural areas
- December 22-24: Door-to-door vaccination in urban areas

officials to maintain uninterrupted power supply at prima-

ry health centers and community health centers to store vaccines safely.

The drive is a collaborative effort between various departments, including health, social welfare, and women's and child development. District officials, including District Panchayat CEO Prakash Halmannavar and District Health Officer Dr. Neeraj B.V., attended the pre-campaign meeting.

The district aims to ensure all eligible children receive the polio vaccine, protecting them from this debilitating disease.

Bus Conductor Assaults Passenger Over Rs 15 Ticket Issue in Udupi

UDUPI

A disturbing incident was reported in Udupi where a city bus conductor allegedly assaulted a passenger, Roshan D'Souza, over a dispute regarding a bus ticket fare. The incident occurred on December 12 at around 10:30 am when Roshan was traveling from Santhekatte to Udupi in a Parijatha city bus (number 1900).

According to Roshan's complaint, the conductor demanded Rs 15 as ticket fare, and when Roshan handed over a Rs 20 note, the conductor asked him to give two Rs 10 notes instead. An argument ensued, and the conductor allegedly assaulted Roshan using a coin, hitting him on the head and right eye. He also banged Roshan's head against the iron handrail inside the bus and pushed him out of



the bus.

Roshan has been undergoing treatment at Ajjarkad district hospital for his injuries. A case has been registered at the Udupi city police station, and the authorities are investigating the incident.

The assault has sparked outrage, with many questioning the conductor's violent behavior over a trivial issue. The incident highlights the need for passengers to be treated with respect and dignity, and for bus operators to ensure that their staff maintain a professional demeanor.

‘Who are the killers?’ campaign demands justice for Dharmasthala

BELTHANGADY

A group of activists, led by Jyoti A., questioned the delay in justice for women victims of rape, murder, and unnatural deaths in Dharmasthala and surrounding areas. "If justice can be swift for Nirbhaya, why is it elusive for our girls?" Jyoti asked, raising concerns about powerful individuals possibly involved in these crimes.

The activists, part of the "Who Are the Killers?" campaign, held a silent protest and a women's justice convention in Beltangadi, demanding answers. "The system is failing our girls. We need to know who is behind these heinous crimes," Jyoti emphasized.

The protest highlighted

several cases, including those of VedaValli, Kusu-mavathi, Indravathi, and Sindhu, where justice has been slow or non-existent. The activists presented a memorandum to the government, seeking action and accountability.

Author Vijaya Dabbe and poet Vinaya Okkunda recited poems, while activists sang songs and read out statements. The event concluded with a demand for justice and an end to violence against women.

The campaign questions the forces behind these crimes, asking, "What is the power that shields these perpetrators?" The activists vow to continue their fight until justice is served and women's rights are protected.

QUICK READ

Narcotics Recovered from Car Involved in Talapady Accident

Mangaluru

Police recovered narcotic substances, including MDMA, from a car involved in an accident at Talapady on Tuesday. The incident occurred when the car hit a tanker, leaving one person injured. The injured person, identified as Adam, was shifted to a hospital for treatment, while the driver, Siddique, allegedly fled the scene. During the investigation, police found narcotic substances inside the car, prompting a case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Commissioner of Police Sudheer Kumar Reddy stated that both accused are residents of Uppala. Further details will emerge after the interrogation of the accused who is injured. The police are investigating the case and probing all the angles of the case.

Konkani Literary Gem: ‘Bhangaracho Kolso’ Released

Mangaluru

The 18th storybook “Bhangaracho Kolso” (Golden Vessel) by renowned Konkani writer J.F. D’Souza was released on Wednesday at the Press Club. The book was unveiled by fellow writer Ronald Roche Cassia. D’Souza is a recipient of several awards, and has served in the State Government’s Forest Department for 39 years. His works include children’s stories, short stories, and humorous anecdotes. His earlier work, “Bhangarachi Masli,” won the Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy Award in 2004. The event was attended by notable personalities, including Janet D’Souza, Marcel D’Souza, and Daphne Menezes. D’Souza’s literary contributions have been widely appreciated, and this latest release is expected to further enrich Konkani literature and further our glorious culture.



Bus Driver Sentenced to 6 Months in Jail for Causing Woman’s Death

Mangaluru

A court in Mangaluru has sentenced a private bus driver, Syed Irfan Ali, to six months in jail and imposed a fine of Rs 3,500 for causing the death of a woman who fell from the bus. The incident occurred eight years ago when the bus driver allegedly overtook another bus at high speed and collided with a container lorry, causing the woman, Kavita, to fall from the bus and succumb to her injuries. The investigation was conducted by Suresh and Shivaprakash H, former inspectors of the Traffic Police Station, and the chargesheet was filed in court. The prosecution was led by government assistant prosecutors Netravati and Geetha Rai, and Aaron D’Souza Witt. Judge Favaz P A of the JMFC 8th Court.

Mangala Stadium to Undergo Two-Month Makeover Starting January

A grant of Rs 3 crore, announced by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, will be utilized for the development works

MANGALURU

The City’s iconic Mangala Stadium, a premier sports venue in the district, will be closed for two months from January for a comprehensive upgrade and modernization of its infrastructure. The stadium, equipped with a 400-meter synthetic track, hosts various athletics events, including running competitions, long jump, high jump, shot put, and javelin throw, and is recognized as being on par with Olympic-standard tracks.

The closure is part of a planned initiative to repair and upgrade the stadium’s facilities, with a focus on fixing



the synthetic track, which has developed depressions in several areas, causing inconvenience to athletes. A grant of Rs 3 crore, announced by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, will be utilized for the development works.

During the closure period, events scheduled at the stadium

will be shifted to alternative grounds, including the district police ground, University College ground, Panambur ground, Swaraj ground at Moodbidri, and Mangaluru University sports ground at Konaje. Officials have indicated that most inter-institutional sports meets will con-

clude by the end of December, minimizing disruptions.

The stadium, which has been a source of pride for Mangaluru for many years, has hosted several state- and national-level athletics meets since its second-phase development works in 2009. The complex includes toilets, dressing rooms, a main gallery, and seating for over 20,000 spectators, as well as a sports hostel, indoor stadium, and swimming pool nearby.

The upgrade is expected to enhance the stadium’s facilities, making it an even more prominent sports hub in the region.



IRCTC Rolls Out Branded Meal Trials on Select Vande Bharat and Amrit Bharat Trains

MANGALURU

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC) has launched branded meal trials on select Vande Bharat and Amrit Bharat trains, including the Mangaluru-Kasaragod sector. This initiative aims to enhance on-board catering services, providing passengers with fresh, hygienic, and restaurant-quality meals.

The proof of concept (PoC) separates meal production from service, partnering with industrial kitchens, restaurant chains, and flight caterers to offer diverse menus, including local delicacies. The trials focus on kitchen infrastructure, meal production processes, transfer of meals, and service across the entire supply chain.

This initiative aims to enhance on-board catering services, providing passengers with fresh, hygienic, and restaurant-quality meals

IRCTC serves approximately 16.5 lakh meals daily across India and aims to achieve a paradigm shift in meal quality and on-board catering. Initial passenger feedback has been positive, and the trials are expected to set a benchmark for fresh, hygienic, and locally inspired meals across the Indian Railways network.

This move is expected to elevate the overall travel experience, offering passengers a taste of local flavors and cuisines, making their journey more enjoyable and memorable.

TRAINS INCLUDED IN THE POC ARE:

- **Mangaluru-Kasaragod-Thiruvananthapuram Vande Bharat Express:** Handled by Casino Air Caterers and Flight Services (CAFS).
- **Nagpur-Secunderabad Vande Bharat Express:** Partnered with M/s Haldiram’s (Nagpur) and Elior (Secunderabad).
- **Delhi-Sitamardi Amrit Bharat Express:** Served by M/s Touch Stone Foundation (Delhi).
- **Kasaragod-Thiruvananthapuram train:** Also handled by CAFS.

Mangaluru Police Issue Guidelines for Safe New Year Celebrations

MANGALURU

The Mangaluru City Police Commissionerate has issued a set of guidelines to ensure public safety and maintain law and order during New Year celebrations. According to the guidelines, establishments planning to organise New Year programmes must obtain prior permission from the office of the concerned Assistant Commissioners of Police by December 23.

The police will take strict action against violators, including seizure of vehicles for drunken driving and prevention of unruly behaviour in public places. Special task forces will be deployed to prevent harassment and violence against women and girls. Further, Additional police personnel will be de-

KEY GUIDELINES INCLUDE:

- **Programme timings:** All New Year programmes must conclude by 12:30 am.
- **Noise levels:** Use of loudspeakers and sound systems requires prior permission and must comply with Noise Pollution Rules, 2000.
- **Substance abuse:** Possession and consumption of prohibited narcotic substances are strictly banned.
- **Liquor sales:** Sale and distribution of liquor will be allowed only with valid permission from the Excise Department.
- **Public safety:** Smoking and consumption of alcohol in public places are prohibited.
- **Security measures:** Organisers must ensure adequate safety arrangements, including fire safety equipment and emergency medical vehicles.

ployed at key locations.

The guidelines aim to ensure a peaceful and joyous New Year celebration. The

police commissionerate has appealed to citizens and organisers to cooperate for a peaceful celebration.

Two Interstate Criminals Held for Vehicle Theft and Chain-Snatching

MANGALURU

In a significant breakthrough, Kadri police have arrested two interstate criminals, Faisal alias Thota Faisal and Nithin Kumar, both from Mysuru, in connection with a chain-snatching incident and a motorcycle theft reported in Bhatkal.

The accused were taken into custody on Tuesday, December 16, following a detailed investigation by the crime wing of Kadri police. The case came to light on December 12, when a Yamaha FZ motorcycle was reported stolen near Sri Hari Complex at Yeyyadi, prompting the police to swing into action.

During the investigation, police established the involvement of the accused in a chain-snatching incident that took place on December 13 at



Gardi HittluBelake in Bhatkal taluk, where a 70-year-old woman, Honnamma Mahadeva Naik, was targeted. The police recovered a gold chain worth approximately ₹1.20 lakh and the stolen motorcycle, valued at around ₹45,000.

Faisal, a resident of Ullal, is a habitual offender with around 42 criminal cases registered against him across Karnataka, including charges of robbery, dacoity, theft, and

murder. More than ten non-bailable warrants are pending against him in various courts, and he had been evading legal action.

Nithin Kumar, a resident of Vinayakanagar in Mysuru, has also confessed to his involvement in the offences. The operation was led by Mangaluru East Police Inspector Ananth Padmanabha, along with a team of officers and staff from Kadri police station.

Notorious Interstate Criminal Arrested

MANGALURU

The City Police have apprehended Abdul Raooof alias Meese Raooof, a 48-year-old resident of Uppala in Kasaragod district, Kerala, who has evading court proceedings despite multiple non-bailable warrants and proclamation orders issued against him. Raooof is involved in at least 25 criminal cases, including robbery, dacoity, attempt to murder, house trespass, and criminal intimidation, across Kerala and Karnataka.

The cases against Raooof include 19 registered at various police stations in Kasaragod district, one at Kavoor police station, and five at Konaje police station in Mangaluru city. A non-bailable warrant was issued in connection with a case registered at Manjeshwar police station, and he was declared a proclaimed offender in five

cases at Konaje police station.

Raooof is considered a notorious interstate criminal and a close associate of Isubu Ziad alias Zia of Uppala Paivalike in Kerala. He has been booked in several serious cases at Manjeshwar police station, including charges under the Arms Act and the PDPP Act. His most recent case, Crime No. 873/2024, was registered at Manjeshwar police station under Section 303(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Acting on specific inputs, a police team led by Assistant Commissioner of Police (North Sub-Division) Srikant K, along with ASI Chandrashekar and staff members, arrested Raooof on December 16. He was produced before the authorities and handed over to Kavoor police station for further legal proceedings.

Karavali Utsav from Dec 20: A 30-Day Celebration of Culture and Adventure

MANGALURU

The Karavali Utsav, a month-long festival showcasing the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of coastal Karnataka, is set to begin on December 20 in Mangaluru. The festival will feature a diverse range of events and activities at six beaches, including Panambur, Ullal, Someshwar, Sasihiithlu, Tannirbhavi, and the Blue Flag Beach.

The main program will be held at the Karavali Utsav Grounds in the city, with adventure sports, music festivals, and cultural performances lined up. Visitors can enjoy wine, cheese, and cake festivals, triathlons, football, and volleyball tournaments, as well as yoga programs and musical evenings.

The festival will also feature football tournaments at the Nehru Maidan football

SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FESTIVAL INCLUDE:

- **Adventure Sports:** Sasihiithlu Beach will host adventure sports, while Tannirbhavi Beach will feature a Music Festival and Triathlon.
- **Cultural Programs:** Panambur Beach will showcase cultural performances, and Someshwar Beach will host musical evenings and yoga programs.
- **Food Festivals:** All six beaches will have food festivals, offering a wide range of local snacks and cuisines.
- **Art and Exhibitions:** An Art Park program and flower and fruit exhibition will be held at Kadri Park.
- **Film Festival:** A film festival will be held in Mangaluru city.

ground and programs at Pili-lukaNisargadhama. For those looking for a bird’s-eye view, helicopter rides will be available.

The Karavali Utsav promises to be an unforgettable

experience, with something for everyone. So mark your calendars and get ready to immerse yourself in the vibrant culture and natural beauty of coastal Karnataka!

Dairy Farming Revival: A Dream of Prosperity

MANGALURU

Ganesha Shetty, a farmer from Miyaru near Karkala, had quit dairy farming three years ago due to losses but recently restarted with support from the South Kannada and Udupi District Milk Producers’ Federation. The federation has revived dairy farming by importing high-yielding HF and German breeds from Erode, Tamil Nadu. Shetty added 30 such cows to his five local breeds and now manages 40 cows with two workers, supplying milk to the federation. Similar success stories include Ibrahim from Belthangady, farming for 17 years. Despite fodder scarcity and disease challenges, incentives, loans, new products, and proper planning have made dairy farming profitable, boosting milk collection and rural employment.

QUICK READ

IT raids pub owned by Shilpa Shetty

Bengaluru

Income Tax Department officials have raided a pub owned by Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty in the city on Wednesday. A team of Mumbai IT officials raided Bastion Pub near Church Street in Bengaluru and inspected important documents. The IT team has also conducted raids in many places in Mumbai.

Multi-crore scam: Lokayukta raids KRIDL office

Bengaluru

Lokayukta officials raided the office of Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Limited (KRIDL) early Wednesday morning. The operation was carried out in the wake of serious allegations of misappropriation of funds to the tune of Rs 5 crore in a case, commission received from contractors and substandard work. A lot of complaints were lodged with the Lokayukta in this regard. The raid was led by Lokayukta SP Shivaprakash Devaraj and the office is examining important documents. Further investigations are underway to gather more information on the allegations.

BIAL reviews pickup system amid complaints

Bengaluru

Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has said that it is investigating complaints regarding the new pick-up system implemented at Kempegowda International Airport terminals and creating a conducive environment for passengers. The same system that is in place at all international airports has been implemented here as well. Although there was resistance when the new rule was implemented, this rule has been beneficial for 95 percent of passengers. Shuttle services are being provided to passengers with walking difficulties, including the disabled, children, senior citizens, etc., BIAL spokesperson said.

Strict guidelines for New Year parties in Bengaluru

The Police department has issued the guidelines in the interest of public safety and avoid any untoward incidents

BENGALURU

As the countdown to the New Year celebrations begins, the Bengaluru Police has taken an important decision. Alerted by the recent incident at a pub in Goa, the police have issued strict guidelines for the New Year celebrations to be held on December 31. These guidelines will be applicable to all places hosting events, including hotels, bars, pubs, and restaurants.

The City Police has issued 19-point guidelines, most notably a complete ban on bursting of firecrackers at event venues. The police have warned of strict action if these rules are violated. The Khaki force is set to implement further strict measures after the Goa pub tragedy.

Permission from the relevant departments is mandatory for the programs. Also, the time and noise limit set for



the New Year celebrations must be strictly adhered to.

Tickets/passes should be distributed as space permits. Events cannot be held on the ground floor, parking lot, or terrace. Checking of those coming to the event should be done and suspicious persons should be informed to the police. If drug use is found at

the venue, the local police should be informed immediately. If drugs are found during a police raid, a case will also be registered against the owner/manager of the building.

Fire extinguishers should be installed and exit doors should be large. CCTV cameras should be installed at ev-

ery venue of the event and footage should be collected for at least 30 days. Large numbers of female private security guards should be appointed at venues where women are present. Agencies deploying security guards and bouncers should be registered with 'PSARA'.

If celebrities, DJs, or actors are invited, their information must be provided to the local police station. No liquor is allowed in unlicensed outdoor venues. No group gatherings or illegal private parties are allowed in hotel rooms. Any untoward incident should be reported to the police immediately. The Police have taken these strict measures to prevent any untoward incidents during the New Year celebrations. The organizers have been clearly warned that violation of the rules will lead to strict legal action.



20-30% hike in pollution-linked ailments in city

BENGALURU

The city's air pollution has led to a spike in several ailments among children, older adults and those with pre-existing conditions.

Doctors have seen a rise in pollution-related ailments over the past two to three weeks. This is due to city's air quality, which has fluctuated between satisfactory and moderate over the last two weeks, they say.

Cases of respiratory infections, asthma flare-ups, eye irritation and dry skin are significantly higher this season, as are the severity of the symptoms. This spike has affected the "vulnerable category" the most, children, older adults and those with pre-existing conditions.

Dr Chandil Gunashekar, a general physician in Whitefield, has observed a 20-25 percent increase in Upper Respiratory Tract infections (URI) compared to last December. Cough, asthma symptoms and respiratory infections are the most common complaints, he says.

Dr Sachin Kumar, Director of Pulmonology and critical care medicine at a private hospital, says, outpatient footfall for respiratory complaints has increased by 20 percent in the last two weeks. Both infectious and non-infectious respiratory symptoms are higher this year, he adds.

Dr Kumar says that viral illnesses that earlier resolved in two to three days are now lasting up to 10 days. Also, patients with diabetes, kidney or heart disease, and people without prior respiratory illness are developing pneumonia. In some cases, they require oxygen support or ICU.

Patients are coming in with issues of breathlessness, cough, throat irritation, wheezing and sneezing, either as symptoms of an allergy or a viral infection.

Among allergy-related respiratory complaints, Dr Shalini Joshi, internal medicine specialist at a private hospital, estimates a 30% increase. "Consistently poor air quality worsens people's tolerance to pollen. Pollutants make the airway more reactive and sensitive, worsening existing pollen allergies," she adds.

Eye-related complaints are another concern. Dr Naren Shetty, ophthalmologist and director at a private hospital, says eye irritation, dryness and redness have increased by around 30 percent this year. Allergic conjunctivitis cases are up by nearly 60 percent compared to December 2024, he adds.

Users oppose artificial turf plan, seek to preserve open access

BENGALURU

After protests stalled plans of turf transformation at Nandan Ground, residents of yet another locality are up in arms against a move to install artificial turf at a football ground. Users of Sir Ground in Jeevanahalli, east Bengaluru, have written to Sarvagnanagar MLA and minister KJ George and Bangalore Central MP PC Mohan to help retain the accessible nature of the ground. Sir Ground, named after former ITI employee and football player-turned-coach Mukundan, is located next to Jeevanahalli railway line near Cox Town.

V Ramakumar, a veteran football player who trained under Mukundan at the ground, also opposed any changes. Many who trained here went on to play at state and national levels representing various teams. They were later recruited by govt departments and PSUs. Ramakumar, who played for several teams, including Coal India Ltd, from where he retired as an assistant engineer, said most players were from socio-economic



nomically disadvantaged sections. Such children will not be able to play in case the ground is handed over to private management, he said, adding that artificial turf is now being discouraged across the globe as it is seen as a health hazard.

R Narayanaswamy, who retired as an administrative officer at Defence Research and Development Organisation's Aeronautical Development Establishment, said he began training at the ground in class 8 and captained the Bangalore University football team for four years. Many people have been able to make a livelihood because of their sporting talent nurtured at Sir Ground,

he said, adding that five players joined the Indian Army through the Madras Engineering Group. The ground serves around 10 surrounding localities. It must remain the same to help produce the next generation of footballers from this part of the city.

Para-athlete S Balaram, a national- and international-level player of shot put, wheelchair racing, wheelchair tennis, and wheelchair cricket, among others, told that the ground was the only nearby facility suitable for athletes with special needs. Balaram's recent feat was his team's third-place fine at the Asian Para Throwball Championship in Cambodia.

BSNL rolls out in-house Sanchar Mitra app nationwide

BENGALURU

Telecom major BSNL announced the nationwide roll-out of its in-house developed customer registration mobile application, 'Sanchar Mitra', marking a key step in restoring and streamlining new customer onboarding services. Developed by BSNL engineers from across the country, the new application replaces the previous Sanchar Aadhaar app, which was earlier used for Aadhaar-based e-KYC verification to add customers to the BSNL network. The earlier app had been developed by a private firm and was used by BSNL retailers and franchisees to digitally verify customer identity. The transition became necessary after the contract with the authorised provider of the Sanchar Aadhaar app expired at the end of November 2025. The expiry had led to temporary disruptions in customer registration services, including the issuance of new and replacement SIM cards across the country.

HC WARNS OFFICIALS OF DISMISSAL FOR DELAYING CASE INFORMATION

BENGALURU

The High Court has issued a stern warning that government officials who fail to provide information requested by the government lawyer in any case or who delay in providing information will be investigated and ordered to be dismissed from service.

The bench of Justice Suraj Govinda Raj issued this warning while hearing a petition filed by Vishwanathan, a senior citizen of Chitradurga.



Vishwanathan, a retired government employee, bought a plot of land and built a house with the money he earned during his service. The

house is currently in the custody of his son and daughter. They are not taking care of their father.

Therefore, the Chitradurga Sub-Divisional Officer had ordered Vishwanath's daughter and son on February 22, 2023, directing them to immediately hand over the house to their father. Vishwanathan had filed an application in the High Court alleging that this order had not been implemented.



Cold wave: Increase in number of patients at KC General Hospital

BENGALURU

Cold winds are intensifying in the city. The effect of the drop in temperature is also affecting people's health. The number of patients coming to KC General Hospital for check-ups for colds, flu and cough is also increasing.

The city has been recording the lowest temperature for the past two or three weeks. People are shivering in the cold. People are hesitant to even step out of their homes due to the temperature of 14 degrees Celsius. People are being admitted to hospitals due to the effects of the cold wind in the city. Children and adults are coming to the city's KC General Hospital with cold and cough. The health of the children is fluctuating, and doctors are monitoring them.

It is normal to visit the hospi-

People are hesitant to even step out of their homes due to the temperature of 14 degrees Celsius. People are being admitted to hospitals due to the effects of the cold wind in the city.

tal due to cough, cold, and flu during winter. But this time, due to the extreme cold, more people are coming to the hospital. While some are getting tested and returning home, some are being admitted to the hospital for treatment. This cold has also affected the health of children, and the children's ward is also full. It will be colder by the end of this month, and the temperature may drop to record levels. So, wear warm clothes and take care of your health. Parents should also be careful about the health of their children.

After decades of choking on the polluted waters of Vrushabhavathi, the time has come for Byramangala lake on the outskirts of Bengaluru to begin cleansing itself. In a long-awaited move, the govt has approved a Rs 391-crore revival plan that promises to transform the long-contaminated waterbody into a clean and dependable resource over the next three years.

According to govt sources, the minor irrigation department, custodian of the lake and Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSB) will jointly take up the



rejuvenation work. NS Boseraju, Minister for Minor Irrigation, confirmed that the cabinet has cleared the proposal and much of the work will be executed by BWSSB.

The board will set up a

PROTECTING LAKE

₹391-cr revival plan to rejuvenate Byramangala Lake

BENGALURU

the lake, he said. The Minister adding that earlier efforts to stop sewage flow into the lake, including a diversion canal proposed with the forest, environment and ecology department, were stalled because of a pending petition before Karnataka High court.

Senior BWSSB engineers told that with the govt keen on developing Bidadi as a satellite township, rejuvenating the lake has become crucial.

The state cabinet has now approved the establishment of the dedicated STP near the lake. Spread across 1,000 acres, Byramangala lake once supported the livelihoods of people in more than 20 sur-

rounding villages. Over the years, however, untreated sewage flowing from Bengaluru via Vrushabhavathi has severely polluted the waterbody. BWSSB Chairperson Ram Prasath Manohar said the new STP will cost about Rs 230 crore and will be operational in three years. "Once commissioned, the STP will treat about 100 MLD of sewage. The tertiary treated water will be released into the lake, and this will be the third phase of the project in the Vrushabhavathi valley. The final quality of water will be ultrapure. Subsequently, the plant's capacity will be enhanced, he said.

QUICK READ

Weavers' Welfare Committee announces bandh

Doddaballapura

The Weavers' Welfare Committee has decided to call for a bandh in Doddaballapura by the end of December, demanding immediate government intervention to resolve the deepening crisis in the local weaving industry. The decision was taken during a district-level consultation meeting held in the city, which was attended by representatives of various political parties and weavers' organisations. The meeting discussed the severe impact of the large-scale import and sale of Surat sarees in Doddaballapura, which has traditionally been known as an important weaving hub.

CSR-funded govt school building construction launched

Anekal

The construction of a new government school building at Soluru village under Vanakana-halli Gram Panchayat in Anekal taluk formally began with a Bhumi Puja ceremony, supported by funds from Bhash Company under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The ceremony was performed by Pandalka Kamath of Bhash Company along with Field Education Officer G. Gurumurthy, marking a significant step towards strengthening educational infrastructure in the region. Speaking on the occasion, Field Education Officer G. Gurumurthy emphasised the importance of collective efforts in developing government schools.

Cyclone Bakung brings dense fog and cold winds

DEVANAHALLI

The effects of Cyclone Bakung, which formed over the Indian Ocean, have begun to make themselves felt in parts of Karnataka, with Vijayapura hobli in Devanahalli taluk experiencing an unusual spell of cold, foggy and cloudy weather. Residents, already grappling with winter conditions, are finding it increasingly difficult to cope as the cyclone's influence has intensified the chill across the region. Dense fog enveloped Vijayapura and surrounding areas until nearly 9 am, significantly reducing visibility and disrupting normal morning routines. Even after the fog lifted, the weather remained overcast throughout the day, accompanied by persistent cold winds. The gloomy conditions continued well into the evening, making it uncomfortable for people to step outside.

Elderly residents and young children were particularly affected by the sudden drop in temperature and lack of sunlight. Many families reported that senior citizens and children stayed indoors for most of the day, as the cold conditions made it difficult to venture out. Local residents described the situation as a cold war imposed by Cyclone Bakung on people who were already enduring the winter season. According to local weather observations, the maximum temperature in Vijayapura hobli was recorded at 22 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature dipped to 17 degrees Celsius.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MABAVVA KOPPAL W/o S R RAJASAB, R/o # 01, Ward No. 01, Near Basavana Katte, Siddrampur, Sindhnur, Raichur, Karnataka - 584128, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as TASLIM BEGUM.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GYANA RANJAN JENA S/o HIRDA NANDI JENA R/o No 012, Wing 1B, Suncity Gloria Apartments, Sarjapura Main Road, Decathlon, Doddaknnahalli, Carmelaram, Bangalore South, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560035, have changed the name of my minor son HIMNISH RANJAN aged 14 years and he shall hereafter be known as HIMNISH RANJAN.

CHANGE OF NAME

I S DEEPAK alias DEEPAK S alias DEEPAK SURESH S/O B A SURESH, R/O #3, Deepthi Nivas, 8th Cross, LBS Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka-560017, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ARYAN VARMA.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHANTHARAJU K S/O KRISHNAPPA, R/O Rajakallahalli, Kolar, Karnataka - 563101, have changed the name of my minor son TRIVANN S aged 05 years and he shall hereafter be known as ADETHYA THANNVEKS.

Cong warns of agitation if Centre obstructs Yettinahole project

Congress leaders in Tumakuru resolved to launch village-level protests if the Centre continues to obstruct the Yettinahole project

TUMAKURU

Congress leaders in Tumakuru have decided to intensify their agitation from the grass-roots level if the Union government continues to obstruct the implementation of the Yettinahole drinking water project. The decision was taken during a meeting held in the city, where party leaders expressed strong displeasure over what they described as repeated hurdles created by the Centre in executing the long-pending project. Addressing the meeting, Congress leaders said the Yettinahole project is crucial for providing drinking water to the drought-prone districts of central Karnataka, including Tumakuru, Chikkaballapura,



Kolar, Ramanagara and parts of Bengaluru Rural. They alleged that despite the state government's commitment and investment, the Centre has been delaying clearances and approvals, affecting timely completion of the project. The leaders warned that if the Union government does not cooperate, the party will take the issue directly to the

people. If the Centre continues to create obstacles, we will be forced to launch a widespread agitation starting from the village level, they said. They added that public awareness programmes, protests and demonstrations would be organised across rural and urban areas to highlight the importance of the project.

Speakers at the meeting said the Yettinahole project is not a political issue but a matter of survival for lakhs of people who face acute drinking water shortages every summer. They accused the Centre of adopting an anti-Karnataka stance by delaying environmental and forest-related approvals, despite similar projects being cleared in other states. Congress leaders also criticised the local BJP leadership, alleging that they have failed to exert pressure on the Union government to protect the interests of the state. They said elected representatives from the ruling party at the Centre should stand with the people of Karnataka rather than remain silent spectators.



Maize procurement centres to be opened in Chitradurga

CHITRADURGA

The Chitradurga district administration has initiated steps to open maize procurement centres for the 2025–26 marketing season, following government orders and based on demand from poultry feed manufacturing institutions. A total of 750 metric tonnes of maize will be procured through designated cooperative societies in the district, officials said. The decision was taken during a meeting of the District Task Force Committee held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner T. Venkatesh. As per the directions issued in the meeting, three procurement centres will be established to facilitate smooth purchase of maize from farmers at the government-declared support price. Accordingly, procurement centres will be opened through the Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) Aimangala to purchase 250 metric tonnes, the Taluk Agricultural Produce Cooperative Marketing Society (TAPCMS) Hiriyur to procure another 250 metric tonnes, and the PACS Madanayakanahalli to procure the remaining 250 metric tonnes of maize. The Deputy Commissioner

Chitradurga district to open maize procurement centres to purchase 750 metric tonnes as per government orders

has instructed the procurement agency, Karnataka State Cooperative Marketing Federation Limited, Chitradurga, to purchase maize strictly in accordance with government norms. Under the guidelines, maize will be procured at a price of ₹2,400 per quintal. Farmers will be allowed to sell maize at the rate of 12 quintals per acre, with a maximum limit of 50 quintals per farmer. Officials have also stressed that only quality maize meeting prescribed standards will be accepted at the procurement centres. As per the quality norms, moisture content in maize should be less than 12 per cent, fungal infection should not exceed 3 per cent, and the grain count should be at least 350 kernels per 100 grams. In addition, toxin levels must be below 20 parts per trillion (PPT), while impurities such as husk, stones and other waste material should be less than 1 per cent.

District-level millet cookery competition on December 30

CHITRADURGA

The Department of Agriculture has announced the organisation of a district-level millet and forgotten foods cookery competition in Chitradurga on December 30, as a prelude to the State-Level Millet and Organic International Trade Fair–2026. Applications have been invited from interested participants, with December 30 set as the last date for submission. According to officials, the competition will be held at 10 am at the office of the Joint Director of Agriculture, located near the APMC Yard in Chitradurga city. The event aims to promote the nutritional value of millets and revive awareness about traditional and forgotten foods prepared using indigenous crop varieties. The competition is open to



the general public across the district, excluding students and officials or staff of the Agriculture Department. Interested participants must submit applications along with a photograph, clearly mentioning their name, address, the dish to be prepared, ingredients required, preparation time and a brief description of the cooking method. Applications must be submitted in person at the Joint Director of Agriculture's office before 10 am on December 30. Participants have been instructed that each contestant is allowed to prepare only one

dish, which may be a sweet, savoury, or a forgotten traditional food. The dish must be prepared at home and brought for display at the venue by 10 am on the competition day, after completing registration at 9 am. Winners of first, second and third prizes at the state level in the previous year's millet cookery competition will not be eligible to participate this year. Only vegetarian dishes made from millets and forgotten foods will be permitted. Millet-based dishes may be prepared using crops such as jowar, ragi, foxtail millet, pearl millet, kodo millet, barnyard millet and little millet. Forgotten foods include traditional recipes made from indigenous landraces, nutritionally rich crops cultivated by a limited number of farmers using local or traditional farming practices.

NAME CHANGE

I, **CHIRAYIL EBRAHIM**, S/o. Chirayil Moideen Haji, Resident of Kolakeri PO Napoklu, Madikeri Taluk, Kodagu Dist -571214, Karnataka, have changed my name to **C M IBRAHIM**, vide affidavit dated: 16.12.2025 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **ALEENA TASKEEN B F**, W/o. Qumar Alam, Resident of No. 39, 1st Main, 2nd Cross, Umarbagh Layout, JP Nagar, Bengaluru - 560078, Karnataka, have changed my name to **F ALEENA TASKEEN**, vide affidavit dated: 17.12.2025 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **ZABI ULLA KHAN Y**, S/o. Yakub Khan Resident of No.176, G Floor 3rd Cross, Lakshmi Layout Arekere Bannerghatta Road Bengaluru-560076, have changed my name to **ZABI ULLA KHAN**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 16.12.2025 before notary R. BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I SAIF ATHER KHAN S/O MUMTAZ AKHTAR HUSAIN R/O Villa 144 Phase 1, The Empyrean Society, Anchemuskur Village, Chikkathirupathi Post, Malur, Kolar, Karnataka-563160, have changed the name of my minor daughter SEHER AKHTAR KHAN aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as SAHAR AKHTAR KHAN.

CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

AFFIDAVIT

I, Inbaraj A S/o C Amburose, residing at no.1353, 2 nd Cross, Manjunath Layout, Chamundinagar, R T Nagar, Bengalore -560032 AND I, C Amburose S/o Chinnappa, residing at no.1353, 2 nd Cross, Manjunath Layout, Chamundinagar, R T Nagar, Bengalore -32 AND I A Anthoniyammal W/o C Amburose, residing at no.1353, 2nd cross, Manjunath Layout, Chamundinagar, R T Nagar, Bengalore -32 1) I, Inbaraj A, Aadhar number 234642921494, 2) I, C Amburose, Aadhar number 926382619887 3) I, A Anthoniyammal, Aadhar number 284584158083, I am citizen of india and I am residing as above address. 4) That Inbaraj A and Inbaraj A, pertain to one and same person i.e., INBARAJ A. 5) That Amburose and C Amburose pertain to one and same person i.e., C AMBUROSE. 6) That Anthoniamma and A Anthoniyammal, pertain to one and the same person i.e. A ANTHONIAMMAL. 7) That we are making this affidavit for the purpose of changing names on Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board Certificate. We have verified that the contents of the above affidavit are true correct to the best of my knowledge and nothing has been concealed therein.

NAME CHANGE

I, **MUBEENA BEGUM SYED YOUSUF**, W/o. Syed Yousuf Bareded, Resident of No.6/2, 3rd Cross Muniveerappa Layout Shampura R.T.Nagar Post, Bengaluru-560032, have changed my name to **MUBEENA BEGUM**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 16.12.2025 before notary R. BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **RESHMA SAMIULLA** W/o. Abdul Parveez, Resident of No.17, Basheera Manzil 2nd Cross Kausar Nagar Dinnur Main Road R.T.Nagar Post, Bengaluru-560032, have changed my name to **RESHMA**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 16.12.2025 before notary R. BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **FIRDAUS MULLA**, D/o. Abdul Shakoor Husain Mulla, Resident of No. 53, 2nd Floor, 1st Block, 15th Cross, R T Nagar, Bengaluru -560032, Karnataka, have changed my name to **FIRDAUS ABDUL SHAKOOR MULLA**, vide affidavit dated: 17.12.2025 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **RUDRESHI M** alias **RUDRESH MALLESHAPPA** S/o K MALLESHAPPA, R/o # 540/49, Ashirwada, Mouneshwara Badavane, Nittuvalli New Extension, Davanagere, Karnataka-577004, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as M RUDRESHI.

Government of Karnataka

PUBLIC WORKS, DEPARTMENT

Office of the Executive Engineer, ChamaraJanagara Division, ChamaraJanagara

e-mail: eecnr@kpwd.gov.in/pwdeechner@gmail.com, Phone/Fax: 08226-222027

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through Kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal only)

H(Two Cover System: Section-1-Technical Bid and Section-2-Financial Bid)

Short Term Tender Notification No 22/2025-26 Dated:15.12.2025 (Call-2,4 & 5)

Item rate tenders are invited through Kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal only on behalf of Governor of Karnataka from Eligible registered civil Contractor in KPWD in Standard Bid document KW-3 & KW-4 form The Total no of works is 1, H/A :- 5054-03-337-0-16-154 SH Bridges Works maximum estimated cost is Rs, 1500.00 lakhs, The Total no of works is 2, H/A:- 5054-04-337-0-01-154 MDR Improvements Works Minimum estimated cost is Rs, 500.00 lakhs, maximum estimated cost is Rs, 750.00 lakhs, AND The Total no of works is 1, H/A :- 5054- 80-190-0-01-132 Kalasanka Works maximum estimated cost is Rs, 70.00 lakhs, Further changes in this Notification will be Published in Kppp.karnataka.gov.in Only. Date of events as follows:

1	Date and Time for downloading the tender document from the Kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal	From 22.12.2025 to 02.01.2026 upto 16.00 Hrs
2	Pre-Bid Meeting Date	24.12.2025 in Division Office Meeting Hall at 11.00 AM
3	downloading the tender document from the Last Date and Time	02.01.2026 Up to 16.00 Hrs
4	Date & Time for opening of Technical bid	03.01.2026 after 16.30 Hrs
5	Date & Time for opening of Financial bid	05.01.2026 Morning 11.00 AM

More information can be had from the web site: <https://www.Kppp.karnataka.gov.in> & Any other details required can be obtained from office of the under signed during office hours.

No: DIPRICHANAGAR: 567: 2025-26 Executive Engineer, PWD Division, ChamaraJanagar

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS

DEPARTMENT DIVISION, VIJAYAPUR.

No:EE/PWD/SINDAGI/2025-26/3570 Dated:16.12.2025

NOTICE INVITING QUOTATIONS FOR

Installation of Street lights on the main street

of Sindagi City in the Sindagi constituency

FOR PREPARATION OF ESTIMATES

Sealed Quotations are invited from the reputed Company / Firms Quotation for Installation of street lights on the main streets of Sindagi city in the Sindagi constituency as per the enclosed specifications on the terms and conditions as given herein for preparation of estimates.

1. The rates should be inclusive of all Services and applicable taxes

2. The rates should be quoted for the quality items and in case if any change in items this should be clearly stated.

3. The rates should be valid for the period of at least (1) One months from the date of quotations and the bidders are bound to submit at these rates, when orders are placed within the validity period.

4. Sealed quotations should be reach this office on or before 23.12.2025 @ 4.00 P.M. or handed over personally in this office. Delay in postal transit will not be considered.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Vijayapur

ಮಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/549/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಎ/2025-26

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Office of the Executive Engineer, No.1, Building Division, SJP Campus, Bengaluru, Phone: 080-22255210

No. EE/Bld.1/AE-LHI/AE-5/2025-26/61 Date: 16.12.2025

INVITATION FOR SHORT-TERM TENDER (IFT) CALL-2

The above Department invites Tenders through e-procurement portal of GoK (<http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>) from eligible Tenderers for below mentioned works. Name of Work: (1) Providing and laying of main sewer pipe line at Race View Building, Race View Cottage and KHB-4Minister quarters at Race Course Road, Bengaluru. Tender Reference:PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_IDENT29937. Approx. value: Rs. 35.08 lakhs. EMD: Rs. 70,200/-. Period of Completion: 03 Months. (2) Annual Maintenance of firefighting equipment system, fire hydrants, Sprinkler system, repairs to firefighting pumps and refilling of fire extinguishers and providing essential water supply and sanitary fittings, painting, polishing and other allied works to Vikasa Soudha, Bengaluru From 01.10.2025 to 31.07.2026. (Reserved for SC) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_IDENT22756/Call-2. Approx. value of work: Rs. 63.90 lakhs. EMD: Rs. 64,000/-. Period of Completion: 10 Months. Cost of Document: As per KPP Portal. Last date for downloading Tender through e-procurement portal and submission through online: 24.12.2025 up to 4.00 PM. Date of opening the Tender: as per e-procurement guidelines. Further information and other details can be obtained from the above office or from e-procurement portal <http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer

DIPR/DD-C.P/4489/KSMCA/2025-26

QUICK READ

**Sabarimala gold case: Ex TDB officer arrested**

Thiruvananthapuram
The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala gold loss cases on Wednesday arrested former Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) administrative officer S Sreekumar, sources said. The arrest came two weeks after the Kerala High Court rejected his anticipatory bail plea, citing strong allegations. The court had also denied bail to former TDB secretary S Jayasree. It noted that granting pre-arrest bail would weaken the probe. Sree-kumar is the seventh person arrested in the case.

RG Kar college case moved to Calcutta High Court**New Delhi**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday transferred the RG Kar Medical College trainee doctor rape and murder case to the Calcutta High Court. The top court, which had taken suo motu notice of the case in 2024, directed that all case records be sent to the high court and a copy of the status report be shared with the victim's parents. The incident, reported in August last year, had triggered nationwide outrage and widespread protests.

Delhi construction workers to get Rs 10K compensation**New Delhi**

Delhi Labour Minister Kapil Mishra on Wednesday announced Rs 10,000 compensation for construction workers who lost income due to GRAP III and GRAP IV anti-pollution measures. He said all government and private offices must ensure 50% staff work from home starting Thursday, or face action. Compensation will be given to registered workers for the days these restrictions are in place, excluding essential services like hospitals and fire departments. Mishra also criticised the Aam Aadmi Party for politicising the issue.

Punjab Governor holds talks with union ministers in Delhi**NEW DELHI**

Punjab Governor and Chandigarh administrator Gulab Chand Kataria on Wednesday met Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Manohar Lal Khattar, and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in Delhi to discuss key issues concerning Punjab and Chandigarh. The meetings focused on infrastructure development, urban planning, road connectivity, public welfare initiatives, and coordinated efforts between the Centre, the state, and Chandigarh administration.

Governor Kataria highlighted the importance of sustainable development, improved civic amenities, and the speedy implementation of ongoing and proposed projects to benefit the region's residents. He stressed that efficient collaboration between different levels of government is crucial for achieving tangible progress in both urban and

President Murmu begins five-day winter sojourn in Hyderabad

President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Hyderabad to begin her annual winter visit and was warmly welcomed at Air Force Station

HYDERABAD

President Droupadi Murmu reached Hyderabad on Wednesday for a five-day winter sojourn. She was warmly welcomed at Air Force Station, Hakeempet, by Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhathi Vikramarka, ministers D. Sridhar Babu and Seethakka, along with Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao, Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy, and senior civil and defence officials.

The President later proceeded by road to Rashtrapati Nilayam at Bollaram, where she will stay until December



21. Police maintained tight security and traffic diversions along the route. During her stay, she will inaugurate the National Conference for Chairpersons of Public Ser-

vice Commissions on December 19 and address the Brahma Kumaris' conference on 'Timeless Wisdom of Bharat' on December 20.

Extensive arrangements

have been made by central and state departments, including Rashtrapati Nilayam officials. The police, fire services, and medical teams are on standby, while special teams address potential wildlife issues such as snakes, monkeys, and honeybees in the expansive green premises.

Rashtrapati Nilayam, originally built in 1860 as the British Resident's country house, became the President's official retreat after Hyderabad's accession to India in 1948. President Rajendra Prasad was the first to stay here in 1955, and since then, every President has conducted official work from this southern sojourn annually.

**Final batch of Apache attack helicopters reaches India****NEW DELHI**

The US Embassy in India on Wednesday welcomed the arrival of the final batch of Boeing AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for the Indian Army, calling it a fulfilment of commitments under the India-US defence partnership. The deliveries, which had faced repeated delays, now complete the contract for six helicopters. The embassy said the milestone strengthens regional security, deepens collaboration in co-production, training, and technology exchange, and reflects the growing US-India defence relationship.

The Indian Army will deploy the helicopters in Jodhpur after assembly, joint inspections, and formalities. The AH-64E Apache is equipped with Hellfire missiles, 70 mm Hydra rockets, Stinger missiles, a 30 mm chain gun, and Longbow fire control radar, offering 360-degree coverage and advanced night operations. The AH-64E Version 6 is optimised for Multi-Domain Operations, integrating sensors, long-range weapons, and network

India receives the final batch of AH-64E Apache attack helicopters, completing the contracted delivery and strengthening India-US defence partnership, regional security, and modernisation of Army Aviation Corps capabilities.

connectivity for complex battlefield scenarios.

The Army Aviation Corps continues to expand its firepower with the Apache fleet, alongside the induction of 90 indigenous Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) Prachand and the Rudra version of the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH). The Indian Air Force already operates 22 Apache helicopters deployed in Ladakh and western sectors.

The first batch of Apache helicopters, initially expected in early 2025, arrived in July after multiple delays. The completion of deliveries marks another step in modernising India's attack helicopter capabilities and enhancing joint operational readiness with the US.

Odisha police take action after temple throne photograph goes viral**Viral Jagannath Temple photo sparks security concerns****PURI**

Odisha Police on Wednesday filed a case after a photograph of the 'Ratna Singhasan' (bejewelled throne) inside the sanctum of Shree Jagannath Temple went viral on social media, raising questions about the shrine's security. Puri SP Prateek Singh said the case was registered at Singha Dwar police station under sections of the Shree Jagannath Temple Act, and the cyber team is monitoring platforms where the photo was shared.

Despite a strict ban on cameras and mobile phones inside the temple, the picture of the deities—Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, and Lord Jagannath—was taken at close range. Singh noted that action can be taken only after identifying those who clicked and shared the image. He also called for stronger legislation,



saying such violations have become frequent.

Jagannath culture researcher Bhaskar Mishra said responsibility lies not only with the person who clicked the picture but also with those who failed to enforce temple rules.

The police investigation continues as authorities work to ensure stricter security measures at the 12th-century shrine, highlighting the need to balance tradition with modern safety protocols.

demanding accountability. Local resident Rathindra Mishra said responsibility lies not only with the person who clicked the picture but also with those who failed to enforce temple rules.

The police investigation continues as authorities work to ensure stricter security measures at the 12th-century shrine, highlighting the need to balance tradition with modern safety protocols.

Surname error in West Bengal voter list sparks controversy**KOLKATA**

A clerical error in the draft voter list in West Bengal has sparked a political row, with CPI(M) leader Md Salim and his son Atish Aziz listed under the Hindu surname 'Awasthi'. Atish Aziz, a registered voter from the Kolkata Port Assembly constituency, discovered the mistake while reviewing the draft electoral rolls released on December 16 as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise.

Aziz shared on social media that both his name and his father's name had the incorrect surname added. "My father has been a politician for decades. If such an error can happen in his case, one can only imagine what might have happened to others," he said. He also questioned the purpose of conducting the SIR at a high



cost if such basic inaccuracies occur.

Aziz criticized sections of the media and the BJP for claiming the SIR process would target Muslims, noting that the error instead "turned both my father Md Salim and me into Brahmins." He shared images of the draft rolls showing 'Awasthi' appended to their names.

The CPI(M) has informed its booth-level agent, who is

coordinating with the Chief Electoral Officer to rectify the issue. The electoral rolls were published following the digitisation of enumeration form data, marking the first phase of the SIR exercise in the state.

The incident has drawn attention to the need for careful verification during voter list revisions, highlighting concerns about accuracy and fairness in the electoral process.

**Congress MPs protest over alleged misuse of ED****NEW DELHI**

Congress MPs on Wednesday staged a protest in the Parliament House complex against the Centre, alleging misuse of the Enforcement Directorate following court relief to Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case.

The protest highlighted the Delhi court's refusal to take cognisance of the ED's money laundering charges against the two leaders, which Congress MPs said reaffirmed that truth had prevailed. Lifting a banner reading "Satyamev Jayate, Truth Prevails," the MPs gathered at the Makar Dwar steps, raising slogans against the government and demanding an apology from the Narendra Modi administration.

Congress leaders participating in the protest included general secretary K C Venugopal, AICC general secretary Mukul Wasnik, MPs Shashi Tharoor, Tariq Anwar, Ku-

mari Selja, K Suresh, and Manickam Tagore. Earlier, the party had demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah following the court relief.

The opposition party also vowed to expose what it called "vendetta politics" against its leadership. Party president Mallikarjun Kharge said at a press conference that Congress workers are agitated and will show their strength, both inside and outside Parliament, against the alleged misuse of investigative agencies. "We will keep fighting them and teach them a lesson," he said.

The Delhi court on Tuesday dismissed the ED's charge, noting that the probe originated from a private complaint and not a formal FIR. The decision provides relief to Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and five others named in the case, marking a significant moment in the ongoing National Herald matter.

SHIMLA FOOD CARNIVAL**Food carnival boosts tourism, empowers women in Shimla****SHIMLA**

The Food Carnival, held alongside the SARAS Fair at Shimla's historic Ridge Ground, has become a major tourist attraction while providing sustainable livelihoods for rural women across Himachal Pradesh. Organised under the Government of India's Rural Livelihood Programme, the ten-day event showcases authentic Himachali cuisine and handmade products, drawing large crowds. Over 100 women from self-help groups manage multiple

stalls, with 17 food stalls run by more than 50 women serving traditional hill dishes like Kangri Dham, Hamirpuri Dham, Bilaspuri Dham, and local delicacies from Kinnaur to Lahaul-Spiti.

Tourists from across India have praised both the food and the initiative. Arun Gupta from Uttar Pradesh called the carnival "a wonderful effort to provide employment to rural women," while Rakesh Bahadur Singh from Banaras said it filled a gap for local cuisine seekers.

Participants from all 12 dis-



tricts of Himachal Pradesh are taking part, gaining confidence, income, and exposure. Rita Thakur from Nirmand Block, Kullu, said the carnival has given women a plat-

form to promote traditional dishes like Siddu while earning to support their families.

According to organiser Sakshi Sharma, the food stalls alone have recorded

sales exceeding ₹10 lakh in just a few days. The initiative also focuses on skill development, teaching women to interact with customers and showcase Himachal's culture effectively.

Alongside food, handicraft stalls, including Chamba chappals and HIMIRA products, are drawing visitors, highlighting the state's rich cultural diversity. The carnival strengthens the link between tourism, traditional cuisine, and women's empowerment, making it a key attraction in Shimla this season.

QUICK READ



‘Cong spreading false claims on National Herald case’

New Delhi
The BJP on Wednesday accused Congress of misleading the public about the National Herald case. Party spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said the trial court did not dismiss the case but only refused to take cognisance of a private complaint, allowing the Enforcement Directorate to continue its probe. He added that the case is still pending in the Delhi High Court, with Sonia Gandhi as Accused 1 and Rahul Gandhi as Accused 2, alleging the Gandhi family relies on propaganda and deception.

Man kills wife and daughters in Shamli

Muzaffarnagar
A man allegedly killed his wife and two minor daughters over a family dispute in Shamli district, police said on Wednesday. The bodies were buried inside their home in Ghari Daulat village on December 10 but discovered only on Tuesday. Accused Farukh has been arrested and confessed, officials said. Police stated he shot his wife Tahira and elder daughter Afreen, then strangled five-year-old Shaireen. A case of triple murder is registered, and security in the village has been tightened following protests by the victim’s family.

BJP criticises DMK for ignoring public welfare

Ranipet
Tamil Nadu BJP chief Nainar Nagenthran on Wednesday accused the DMK government of confronting the Centre instead of working for the people. He said the state blocked the setting up of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and raised language issues, indulging in diversionary tactics rather than public welfare. Nagenthran also criticised DMK’s opposition to the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission Bill, 2025, and questioned VCK’s silence on local incidents like water contamination and hooch tragedies, calling their selective protests strange.

Hanumangarh farmers renew stir over proposed ethanol project

Opposition grows in Hanumangarh as farmers rally against a controversial ethanol plant

JAIPUR

Hanumangarh district in Rajasthan remains on edge as farmers intensify their protest against a proposed ethanol manufacturing unit, calling a large Mahapanchayat to press their demands. The agitation has gained momentum after discussions between farmer representatives and the district administration failed to reach a solution.

The Mahapanchayat is set to take place on Wednesday at the grain market in Hanumangarh Junction, after being shifted from the District Collectorate area due to security considerations. Farmers argue that the ethanol plant, coming up in Rathli Kheda village of Tibbi tehsil, poses a serious threat to groundwater levels



and could lead to air and water pollution, affecting farming and public health.

In preparation for the gathering, farmer groups have travelled across nearby villages to mobilise support. At the same time, the district administration has tightened security arrangements, fearing unrest. Prohibitory orders under

Sections 144 and 163 have been enforced across the district, restricting assemblies, rallies and processions.

Authorities have also banned the carrying of weapons, sticks and the use of provocative slogans or speeches. Officials warned that strict action would be taken against anyone violating the orders. As an added precaution, internet services at the district headquarters have been suspended for two days to prevent rumours and misinformation.

Additional police personnel have been deployed from neighbouring districts to maintain law and order. Despite these measures, farmer leaders remain firm, stating that their protest will continue until the construction is halted.

The opposition to the plant has been ongoing for more than a year. While protests were largely peaceful initially, tensions escalated after construction resumed under police protection in November, leading to clashes, arrests and injuries during demonstrations near the factory site.

Central government clarifies status of Nehru papers

Continued from page 1

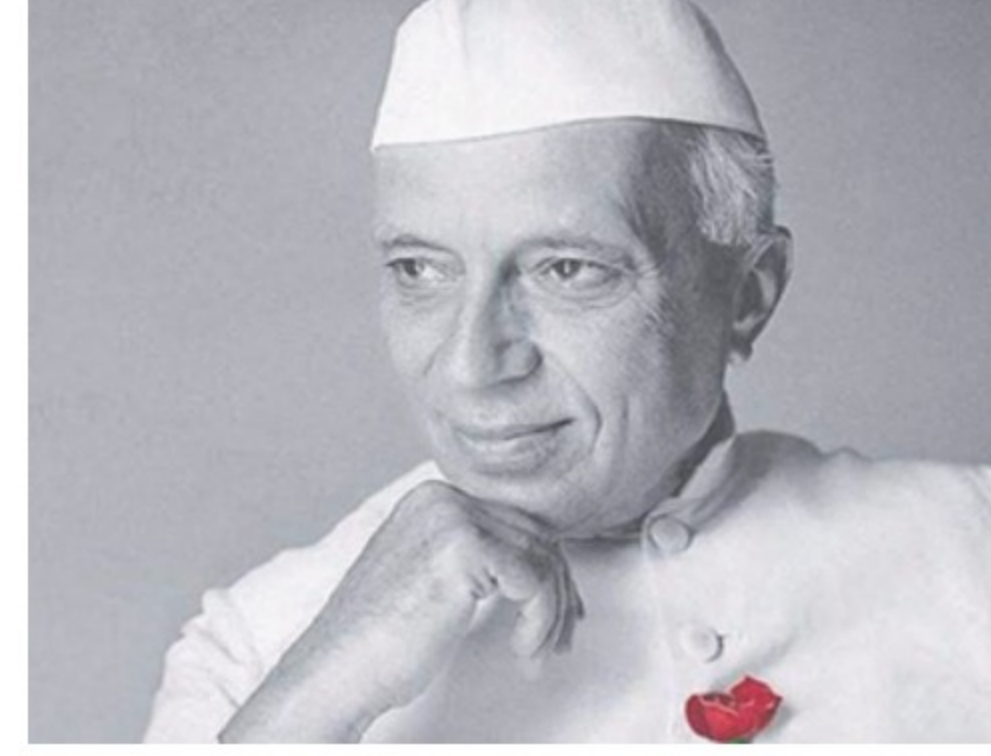
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Wednesday asserted that documents related to India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, are not missing from the Prime Ministers’ Museum and Library (PMML), but clarified that 51 cartons of papers sent to Congress leader Sonia Gandhi in 2008 have yet to be traced.

The clarification followed demands from the Congress for an apology after the Ministry of Culture informed Parliament that no Nehru-related records were found missing during a routine verification exercise at PMML. The government maintained that the annual inspection did not reveal any absence of documents or correspondence linked to Nehru, countering claims made by the opposition.

In a detailed statement, the ministry explained that in April 2008, a request was made by a representative of Sonia Gandhi seeking the return of private family letters and notes of Jawaharlal Nehru. Acting on this request, PMML transferred 51 cartons of papers to her. The ministry said these consignments are therefore not “missing,” as their transfer was formally recorded, but added that their current whereabouts remain unclear.

The ministry further stated that PMML has been in continuous communication with



The Centre clarified Nehru’s private papers are not missing but with Sonia Gandhi. It urged their return, saying they form part of India’s documentary heritage and are accessible for research

Gandhi’s office since then, repeatedly seeking the return of the documents. It stressed that these papers constitute part of India’s national documentary heritage and should remain in PMML’s custody to ensure public access for citizens and researchers.

The issue resurfaced after a PMML Society member flagged concerns over restricted access to Nehru’s private papers, prompting renewed correspondence with Gandhi. Meanwhile, Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat reiterated in a written Lok Sabha reply that no Nehru documents were found missing during the 2025 inspection. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh responded by reiterating the party’s demand for a government apology.

Yogi Adityanath honours PAC personnel for their courage and service

UP CM Yogi commemorates PAC Foundation Day 2025

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday congratulated the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) on its Foundation Day, recalling the bravery of PAC personnel during critical terror attacks. He highlighted their valour during the December 13, 2001, Parliament attack, stating that PAC officers on duty “responded bravely and killed all five terrorists.” He also remembered their courage during the July 2005 terrorist attack at the Shri Ram Jammabhoomi complex in Ayodhya, where a joint team of CRPF, PAC, and



UP Police eliminated all the attackers.

The Foundation Day celebrations included multiple demonstrations showcasing the skills and discipline of PAC forces in the presence of the CM. Yogi Adityanath praised the 78-year legacy of the PAC, noting its unwavering dedication in maintaining public order and safety in India’s most populous state.

He also recounted the

PAC’s origins: in 1948, the U.P. Military Police and U.P. State Armed Constabulary were merged to form the Provincial Armed Constabulary. The force was established to handle serious law and order situations without frequent Army deployment. Though primarily serving Uttar Pradesh, the PAC has had the honour of operating across the country.

The CM lauded the PAC’s continued role in upholding law and order, protecting citizens, and exemplifying courage, discipline, and professionalism, reinforcing the significance of the force in ensuring public safety.

Supreme Court directs NHAI, MCD to shift nine toll plazas

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to consider either temporarily closing or relocating nine toll plazas at Delhi’s borders to ease traffic congestion and reduce vehicular emissions amid severe air pollution in the capital. The court described the recurring pollution crisis as an “annual feature” and urged practical, enforceable solutions rather than mere policy framing.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant asked the MCD to decide within one week whether temporary closure of toll plazas is feasible. The court, however, refused to interfere with the Delhi government’s decision to close schools for nursery to Class 5 students, noting that winter break was imminent.

The bench emphasised strict implementation of existing pollution control measures and directed the Delhi government to verify construction workers affected by curbs and ensure direct financial assistance. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhat informed the court that around 7,000 workers have been verified out of 2.5 lakh registered workers, and assured that funds would be transferred directly to their accounts. The court cautioned against leakages and urged consideration of alternative employment for workers impacted by pollution restrictions.

BJP rejects Rahul Gandhi’s claim on manufacturing decline

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday refuted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi’s remark that India’s manufacturing sector is declining, calling it “fake news” against the country’s growth story. BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari highlighted significant progress in electronics and automobile manufacturing over the past decade and beyond.

Bhandari, in an X post, stated that total electronics production grew from ₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014-15 to ₹11.3 lakh crore in 2024-25, a 495 per cent increase. Electronics exports surged 760 per cent, from ₹38,000 crore to ₹3.27 lakh crore. Mobile manufac-

turing also saw rapid growth, with production units rising from 2 in 2014-15 to nearly 300 in 2024-25, and production value increasing over 2,900 per cent. Mobile phone exports jumped from ₹1,500 crore to ₹2 lakh crore during the same period.

On automobiles, Bhandari said vehicle production rose from 2 million units in 1991 to 28 million units in 2024, a 14-fold increase. India aims to produce 50 million vehicles by 2030 and become one of the top two auto manufacturers globally by 2047. He added that these figures demonstrate “manufacturing-led growth backed by data, not slogans,” and dismissed Rahul Gandhi’s claims as denial of reality.



Rahul Gandhi, during a visit to Germany, had said India’s manufacturing is declining and needs to increase production for economic growth. He cited his visit to a BMW factory and the success of Indian-made vehicles, stressing that production is essential for a country’s progress. The BJP’s response comes as it highlighted India’s record growth in electronics and automobiles under PM Modi’s leadership.

GUJARAT WILDLIFE TOURISM

Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary attracts over 52,000 visitors

GANDHINAGAR

Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary, located near Jamnagar, attracted 52,400 visitors in 2024-25, highlighting Gujarat’s growing commitment to wildlife conservation and eco-tourism. Spanning over 600 hectares, the sanctuary features a unique mix of freshwater lakes and saltwater marshes, offering habitats for a diverse array of bird species. The Forest and Environment Department reported an increase in recorded bird species from 317 in 2023-24 to 332 in 2024-25, reflecting the sanctuary’s flourishing biodiversity.

Recognised internationally for its ecological importance, Khijadiya was designated a Ramsar Site in 2022. The state has invested in visitor-friendly infrastructure, including watchtowers, bird-watching platforms, interpretation cen-



tres, Van-kutirs, selfie points, and informative signboards, making the sanctuary both accessible and engaging for tourists, researchers, and bird enthusiasts.

The sanctuary’s ecological richness is shaped by the interaction of freshwater inflows and coastal tides, along with a network of embankments and dikes that create microhabitats supporting various wildlife species. These diverse environments not only enhance the sanctuary’s attractiveness for

birdwatching and eco-tourism but also demonstrate Gujarat’s scientific and integrated approach to environmental conservation.

As Rajkot prepares to host the Vibrant Gujarat Regional Connect (VGRC) in January 2026, Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary serves as a living example of how ecological preservation can go hand in hand with economic development. Its thriving biodiversity complements the state’s broader initiatives in tourism, agriculture, climate resilience, and sustainable infrastructure. By balancing environmental stewardship with development, Khijadiya exemplifies Gujarat’s vision of “Prosperity with Sustainability,” showcasing the state’s commitment to protecting natural heritage while promoting sustainable growth for visitors, researchers, and local communities alike.

AICTE launches IDE bootcamp for PM SHRI school staff

NEW DELHI

AICTE Chairman Prof. TG Sitharam on Wednesday inaugurated the Innovation, Design and Entrepreneurship (IDE) Bootcamp for principals and teachers of PM SHRI Schools through an online event. The bootcamp is being conducted simultaneously at 14 locations across 12 states.

Addressing participants, Prof. Sitharam stressed that education should go beyond rote learning to enable students to think creatively, design solutions, and innovate. He said the IDE Bootcamp aims to equip teachers with experiential, product-oriented learning methods and to integrate design thinking, innovation pedagogy, and entrepreneurship into schools, fostering a confident and future-ready generation of problem-solvers.

Additional Secretary and Director, Department of



School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Dheeraj Sahu, highlighted the importance of school-level leadership, noting that the bootcamp provides principals and teachers with tools and frameworks to guide innovation under the PM SHRI Schools initiative. AICTE Vice Chairman Dr. Abhay Jere described the programme as a collaborative effort to embed innovation in school education through teacher training, school innovation councils, and buildathons, creating mentors for students from early stages

through higher education and startups.

The bootcamp is jointly organised by DoSEL, AICTE, Ministry of Education’s Innovation Cell (MIC), NCERT, and the Wadhvani Foundation. Phase I runs from December 17 to 19, 2025, across 14 locations, followed by Phase II from December 22 to 24, and Phase III from January 7 to 9, 2026, covering 21 and 15 locations respectively. Over 200 experts will train more than 9,000 participants across 50 centres.

The initiative follows successful capacity-building workshops for District Education Officers and DIET members held from October 30 to December 5, 2025. AICTE reaffirmed its commitment to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship at all educational levels, aligning with the objectives of the National Education Policy 2020.

Hooda urges Centre to prioritize welfare over politics

PANCHKULA

Congress leader and Haryana Assembly Opposition Leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Wednesday termed the National Herald case “politically motivated” and urged the Centre to prioritise public welfare over “political revenge.” Hooda led a protest in Panchkula with Congress workers under Rao Narender Singh. He said the court’s verdict proved the political intent behind the case. His remarks came after a Delhi court declined to take cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate’s complaint, observing that proceedings under the PMLA cannot continue without an FIR for the scheduled offence and that a private complaint cannot replace it. Meanwhile, Congress leaders in Karnataka protested in Belagavi, while Opposition MPs demonstrated in Parliament, alleging vendetta politics and misuse of agencies.



QUICK READ

India Signals Concern Over Dhaka March

Dhaka

India has not made a formal statement but has indicated concern over an anti-India march planned in Bangladesh. Citing security reasons, the Indian Visa Application Centre in Dhaka closed early on Wednesday, with appointments to be rescheduled. The move comes ahead of a march to the Indian High Commission by a headline group. Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs summoned Bangladesh's High Commissioner over security concerns following threats and strong anti-India remarks by a Bangladeshi political leader.



Iran Boosts Ties, Stays Vigilant

Tehran

Iran on Tuesday highlighted its focus on strengthening regional cooperation while maintaining strong security preparedness. Government spokesperson Fati-meh Mohajerani said President Masoud Pezeshkian's recent visits to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan resulted in 14 agreements aimed at expanding trade and economic ties. She stressed the government's support for private sector growth and removal of business hurdles. On security, Mohajerani said Iran remains alert to regional threats but open to respectful and realistic dialogue with the United States.

China Staff Disrupt Taiwan Tea Award

Taipei

Staff from the Chinese embassy disrupted an award ceremony at an international tea contest in Paris after Taiwan was mentioned and its flag displayed. Despite the interruption, organisers continued the event and the audience backed the Taiwanese awardee. The incident drew criticism from Taiwan's foreign ministry, which urged China to follow international norms. The award highlighted Taiwan's global recognition, with participants from several countries attending the competition.

PM Modi Highlights Green Vision in Ethiopia

Global South charting its future, India and Ethiopia share vision: Prime Minister Narendra Modi

ADDIS ABABA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday planted a sapling at the Ethiopian Parliament under India's "Ek Ped, Maa Ke Naam" initiative, underlining India's commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development. The gesture was linked with Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative, reflecting a shared resolve by both countries to safeguard nature for future generations.

Addressing a joint session of the Ethiopian Parliament, Prime Minister Modi conveyed India's greetings of friendship and goodwill. Referring to Mahatma Gandhi's idea of trusteeship, he said humanity does not own the Earth but holds it in trust for generations to come. He noted that India and Ethiopia, as ancient civilisations, share deep cultural bonds and can be seen as natural partners, with Ethiopia at the crossroads of Africa and India at the heart of the Indian Ocean.

The Prime Minister highlighted the shared vision of India and Ethiopia for the Global South, calling for fair development, accessible technology, respect for sovereignty, shared prosperity and lasting peace. He also drew parallels between the constitutions of the two nations, pointing out that both place people at the centre of national destiny.

Prime Minister Modi recalled the contribution of thousands of Indian teachers



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the Global South is shaping its own future, speaking at a joint session of the Ethiopian Parliament. He said India and Ethiopia share a common vision based on fair development, accessible technology and respect for sovereignty. PM Modi stressed the need to reform global systems to reflect present realities and emphasised the deep historical, cultural and economic ties between the two countries.

who have worked in Ethiopia over the decades, saying they played an important role in the country's development and earned deep respect among its people.

Earlier, he paid tribute at the Adwa Victory Monument and visited the Adwa Museum,

honouring Ethiopia's long struggle for freedom and sovereignty. After his address, the Prime Minister interacted with members of Parliament and reaffirmed India's commitment to strengthening ties with Ethiopia based on shared values, trust and cooperation.

Global Petition Urges G7 Action on China

LONDON

More than 500,000 people across the world have signed a petition calling on the Group of Seven (G7) nations and several other countries to take action against alleged forced organ harvesting by the Chinese Communist government. The petition was launched in July 2024 by Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) and the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China. As of December 15, it had gathered 505,970 signatures from people in 34 countries. The campaign urges governments to address what it describes as serious human rights violations involving the removal of organs from prisoners of conscience in China. The appeal is directed at the G7 countries—the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom—as well as Argentina, Australia, India, Israel, Mexico, South Korea and Taiwan.

Pakistan to Launch Secure Messaging App for Officials

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is preparing to introduce a locally developed secure messaging application, named "Beep," for government employees in the coming months. The app is aimed at providing a safe and reliable communication platform for public sector institutions across the country.

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecom was informed that Beep is in the final stages of development and is expected to meet its project deadline of June 30, 2026. The application has been developed by the National Information Technology Board (NITB) and is inspired by China's

WeChat platform.

NITB Chief Executive Faisal Iqbal Ratyal told the committee that Beep has been locally built and certified by relevant authorities, including the National Computer Emergency Response Team (NCERT), making it suitable for official government use. Committee chairman Syed Aminul Haque directed the NITB to ensure the app is rolled out on time.

Ratyal said the app's main purpose is to offer a secure messaging system for government employees nationwide. The rollout will be done in phases, beginning with federal ministries and their attached departments. The initial launch is expected within the next two months.

Quetta Protest Against Disappearances Marks Over 6,000 Days

BALUCHISTAN

The protest camp organised by the Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP) against enforced disappearances completed 6,031 days on Tuesday, continuing its long-running sit-in outside the Quetta Press Club. The camp has remained a symbol of resistance and hope for families seeking information about their missing relatives.

On the occasion, people from different walks of life



visited the camp to express solidarity with the affected families. Participants demanded an immediate end to enforced disappearances and

called for the safe recovery of all missing persons. They described the issue as a serious human rights crisis that affects not only individual fam-

Voting Begins to Elect New UML Leadership

KATHMANDU

Voting to elect new leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal—Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) began in Kathmandu on Wednesday morning during the party's 11th General Convention. The process started about an hour later than planned due to technical problems in electronic voting machines (EVMs).

Polling had earlier been scheduled to begin on Tuesday night but was postponed after repeated glitches forced delegates to leave the queues at the Bhrikutimandap venue. UML General Secretary Shankar Pokhrel said the delay was unavoidable because of the technical issues. Another reason for the postponement was opposition from the faction led by Ishwar Pokhrel, which objected to voting during night hours.

A total of 2,263 delegates are eligible to vote, and electronic machines are being used throughout the process. Technicians estimate that it will take around 30 minutes for each delegate to cast a vote. While 11 candidates have already been



Voting has started at CPN-UML's general convention in Kathmandu after delays, with party leaders and delegates choosing a new leadership amid close contests and visible internal divisions.

electd unopposed, the nominations of two others were cancelled for violating party rules. Delegates are voting to elect 301 central committee members representing different regions and groups.

Party chair KP Sharma Oli is seeking a third straight term

but faces a strong challenge from Ishwar Pokhrel, who is backed by former President Bidya Devi Bhandari. Oli loyalist Shankar Pokhrel is contesting again for general secretary, with Surendra Pandey emerging as a serious rival.

Several senior leaders have broken ranks and joined the Pokhrel camp, leading party insiders to predict mixed results. While Oli is still seen as influential, the race for general secretary is expected to be close. Campaigning around the venue has remained intense, with posters, rallies and online outreach dominating the area.

Attack highlights ongoing risks faced by polio teams and police

Policeman, Brother Killed After Polio Duty

LAKKI MARWAT

A police constable and his brother were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after the officer completed security duty with a polio vaccination team, officials said on Tuesday. The attack took place near the Chwar Khel area of Lakki Marwat district.

According to police, Constable Amir Nawaz was travelling back to his village along with his brother, Ameer Mohammad, when armed men riding motorcycles opened fire on them. Both brothers were killed on the spot. The victims were siblings of former district councillor Ali Gul. Their bodies were later shifted to the district headquarters hospital for post-mortem examination.

Soon after the incident, a heavy police contingent reached the area and launched a search operation to trace the attackers. Security was tightened in and around Lakki Marwat amid concerns over possible further attacks. Police officials said checkpoints were strengthened and patrols increased to maintain order.



Funeral prayers for the two brothers were held later in the evening and were attended by senior officials, including District Police Officer Nazir Khan, Deputy Commissioner Hamidullah Khan, SP Investigation Murad Ali Khan, and other police and administrative officers. A large number of relatives and local residents also attended the prayers.

Earlier the same day, another police constable deployed on polio duty and a passerby were shot dead in a separate incident in Bajaur district. The attacks highlight the continuing threats faced by polio workers and the security personnel assigned to protect them.

Authorities said investigations are underway in both cases, and assured that all possible efforts are being made to identify and arrest those responsible.

Transport Strike Hits Karachi Port, Industry Under Pressure

KARACHI

A nine-day strike by cargo transporters has badly disrupted operations at Karachi port, raising serious concerns among business leaders that economic activity in the city and across Sindh could come to a halt. Industries are facing shortages of raw materials, while finished goods remain stuck.

Business groups have urged the Sindh government to step in and resolve the issue, warning that prolonged disruption is damaging production and supply chains. In a letter to the Sindh chief minister, Abdul Aleem, Secretary General of the Overseas Investors Chambers of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) said the situation had become alarming for industry and trade. He noted that while limited relief was seen in Punjab after raising the matter with provincial authorities, conditions in Sindh and at Karachi port remain unchanged. OICCI members reported that trucks from Punjab are still unable to reach Karachi, severely affecting port movement. Several major manufacturing units are close to shutting down, with at least one reporting that production had already stopped. Others expect closures within days as raw materials fail to arrive and finished goods remain stranded on highways.

The Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturers Association said supplies of edible oil, ghee and other essential items have been disrupted. Its chairman warned that stopping raw material flows could damage the entire production cycle and hurt the broader economy. Imported consignments are also stuck at ports, increasing financial losses due to demurrage and detention charges. The Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers said the strike is having a devastating impact on industry and could lead to job losses and wage cuts.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	8		5		1		3	
1		3		4		5		9
	4		7		3		8	
4		8	6		9	7		5
	5			7			9	
9		7	3		8	2		4
	2			3			5	
	9			1		8		7
6		1	2		5		4	

5	1	4	6	3	2	9	8	7
7	9	8	5	1	4	2	3	6
6	3	2	7	9	8	5	1	4
3	4	2	1	7	5	6	9	8
9	8	5	2	4	6	3	7	1
1	6	7	3	8	9	4	5	2
2	5	1	9	6	7	8	4	3
8	3	9	4	2	1	7	6	5
4	7	6	8	5	3	1	2	9

Fill a 9x9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3x3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

WATER CRISIS PAKISTAN

Seminar Flags Pakistan's Growing Safe Water Crisis

ISLAMABAD

Only 47 per cent of Pakistan's population has access to safe drinking water, experts warned at a seminar organised by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in Islamabad. The discussion highlighted the country's worsening water-quality crisis and its serious impact on public health, economic productivity and sustainable development.

Speaking at the seminar titled "The Thirst for Safety:

Water Quality and Public Health in Pakistan", Dr Hifza Rasheed, Director General (Water Quality) at the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), said Pakistan's per capita freshwater availability has fallen sharply from 5,260 cubic metres in 1951 to below 1,000 cubic metres in 2024. This places the country among water-scarce nations.

Dr Rasheed and Dr Shujaat Farooq, Dean (Research) at PIDE, said unsafe drinking water is responsible for nearly



40 per cent of diseases nationwide. They stressed the need for urgent, coordinated and climate-resilient reforms to secure Pakistan's water fu-

ture. Experts, researchers and students attending the event discussed how poor water quality is affecting health, productivity and long-term development.

Dr Farooq noted that despite Pakistan's natural water resources, contamination, overuse and weak institutional coordination have made water insecurity a major public health challenge. Citing UNICEF data, he said nearly 70 per cent of households use contaminated water, leading to widespread illnesses such

as diarrhoea, hepatitis and typhoid.

Dr Rasheed added that agriculture uses about 93 per cent of freshwater, yet irrigation efficiency remains below 40 per cent. She warned that unsafe water causes around 53,000 child deaths annually and contributes to high child stunting rates. Industrial waste, pesticides and untreated sewage remain major pollutants, while climate-related floods have further worsened contamination and disease risks.

QUICK READ

ARCs to Double Stressed Road Asset Recoveries by FY27

New Delhi

Cumulative recovery rates for stressed operational road projects by asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) will surge about 120 per cent by the next fiscal (FY27) from FY25 levels, a report said on Wednesday. The report from Crisil Ratings said that improvement will be driven by timely annuity payments by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), healthy toll collections and resolutions through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Further, having gained substantial capabilities in the road sector, ARCs are also eyeing acquisition of terminated assets banking on collaborative efforts by multiple stakeholders to pave the way for timely recoveries, the report said.

India Achieves Self-Reliance in Space Transportation: Singh

New Delhi

India has achieved self-reliance in space transportation systems and can launch satellites up to 10 tonnes to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and 4.2 tonnes to Geo-Synchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO), said Jiten-dra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, in the Parliament on Wednesday. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Singh shared that the feat has been achieved through the currently operational PSLV, GSLV, and LVM3 launch vehicles. These launch vehicles have enabled independent space access to satellites for earth observation, communication, navigation, and space exploration.

Cutting debt-to-GDP ratio will be govt's core focus in coming fiscal: FM Sitharaman

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said that reducing the country's debt-to-GDP ratio will be the core focus for the government in the next financial year (2026-27). Speaking at a media event here, Sitharaman stressed that it is crucial to bring down the debt-to-GDP ratio, which crossed 60 per cent during the Covid period. It is already coming down, but we need to reduce it further, and this will be a core focus in the next financial year, the Finance Minister said, noting that RBI documents and studies show worrisome debt-to-GDP ratios in some states.

Unless managed within FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act) limits and high-interest debt is reduced, states borrow to service loans, not development -- a poor fiscal play. This threatens the 10-year momentum for Viksit Bharat by 2047, she pointed out.

The Finance Minister said that the central government has set goals for transparency in budgeting, ensuring fiscal management meets accountability standards. We've brought down debt-to-GDP from over 60 per cent post-Covid; it's declining, with debt reduction as the core focus on the next financial year (fiscal deficit remains a marker). Entrepreneurial bankers note the changing ecosystem, she added.

Sitharaman said that the government is also working to deepen the bond market to allow more funds to flow in. The Union government's discipline under Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi's steady leadership now in its third term enables India's global positioning to negotiate at the high table. This strength comes from a stable government, she said.

Sitharaman further stated that with financial inclusion, credit access via Mudra, and everyone having accounts, every Indian's credit footprint has grown, enabling formal bank credit. I'm saying this because we can aspire to an India that contributes 25 per cent to world trade, 25 per cent of global trade emanates from India.

GCCs in India to account for 35-40 pc of total office demand

MUMBAI

Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are likely to account for 35-40 per cent of total office demand in 2025, and they made up more than 55 per cent of large office deals in the first nine months of CY25, a report said on Wednesday.

The report from CBRE South Asia Private Limited said that resilient demand fundamentals underpinned another record year for office leasing, with gross leasing expected to surpass 80 million sq. ft. in 2025. Around 60 million sq. ft. of gross leasing was recorded between January and September the highest first nine month total on record. The firm forecasted that resilient

RBI SIGNALS PROLONGED LOW RATES AMID STRONG GROWTH

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra signals low interest rates amid strong growth, subdued inflation, and optimism over trade deals

NEW DELHI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra has indicated that key policy interest rates are likely to remain low for a long period, supported by the central bank's economic projections and prevailing macroeconomic conditions. According to a report published by the Financial Times, Malhotra expressed confidence that India's economy is witnessing robust growth while inflation remains firmly under control, creating favourable conditions for maintaining an accommodative monetary environment.

The RBI Governor further noted that India's economic growth could exceed the central bank's current projections if ongoing trade negotiations with major global partners are successfully concluded. In particular, he highlighted the potential impact of a proposed trade agreement with the United States, stating that such a deal alone could add as much as half a percentage point to India's economic growth. While the RBI has not yet undertaken a detailed assessment of the potential benefits of a trade agreement with the European Union, Malhotra said it is also expected to provide an additional boost to growth.

India has significantly expanded bioenergy capacity over a decade, driven by govt incentives and targeted renewable energy programmes

India Expands Bioenergy with Major Biomass, Waste, Biogas Additions

NEW DELHI

India has added substantial bioenergy capacity over the last ten years, reinforcing its push towards cleaner and more sustainable energy sources, Parliament was informed on Wednesday. The country has added 2,361 MW of biomass-based power capacity, 228 MWe of waste-to-energy capacity, and established around 2.88 lakh biogas plants during this period, propelled by a range of government-supported schemes and financial incentives.

In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for New and Renewable Energy Shripad Yes-so Naik said the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has been actively supporting the installation of bioenergy projects across the country. These efforts are currently being implemented under the National Bioenergy Programme (NBP), Phase-I, which was notified on November 2, 2022, with a total budget outlay of ₹998 crore for the period from 2022-23 to 2025-26.

The minister noted that government support for bioenergy projects has been consistent over the past decade through multiple schemes. These include the National Biogas and Manure Management Programme (NBMMP) implemented during the 12th Five-Year Plan, and the New Na-

SBI Sees Rupee Rebound in Next Fiscal Half

MUMBAI

Geopolitical uncertainties driven by the delay in the India-US trade deal have been the single-most important reasons for the rupee sliding against the US dollar, an SBI Research report said on Wednesday, adding that the rupee is likely to bounce back strongly in the second half of the next fiscal. India's trade data shows the remarkable resilience in navigating through prolonged uncertainty, more protectionism and labour supply shocks. While the geopolitical risk index has moderated since April 2025, the current average value of the index for April-October 2025 is much greater than its decadal average.

India Expected to Achieve Around 7% Growth in FY26

NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is expected to record around 7 per cent growth in the current fiscal, slightly higher than 6.6 per cent projected by the IMF in October, said Gita Gopinath, former chief economist of the Washington-based International Monetary Fund.

Gopinath said that the IMF made its projection for India's growth before the National Statistical Office (NSO) came out with its July-September quarter growth rate of 8.2 per cent.

"I would say that the IMF number (India's growth projection) was 6.6 per cent that came out in October. But their forecast for the second quarter of the current fiscal, in terms of what the growth would be, was much lower than what it turned out to be at over 8 per cent.

Nationwide MLFF Tolling and AI Highway Management to Eliminate Toll Delays by 2026

NEW DELHI

The nationwide implementation of the multi-lane free flow (MLFF) tolling system along with AI-powered highway management is likely to be completed by the end of 2026, a move expected to virtually eliminate waiting time at toll plazas across India. This information was shared with Parliament on Wednesday by Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari during Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha.

Responding to a query, the minister said the introduction of MLFF technology will mark a major transformation

Modi Visit Boosts India-Oman Strategic, Economic Ties

MUSCAT

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepares to arrive in Oman, members of the Indian business and professional community have expressed strong optimism, describing the visit as a significant opportunity to further strengthen India-Oman relations. Indian industry leaders said the visit comes at a crucial moment when both nations are keen to elevate their partnership through structured dialogue and enhanced economic cooperation across key sectors.

Business leaders highlighted that sectors such as energy, manufacturing, healthcare, tourism and logistics stand to benefit substantially from closer engagement. There is also growing anticipation that discussions during the visit could accelerate progress towards a possible Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which is expected to provide a major boost to bilateral trade and investment flows.

Nirmal K. Minda, Executive Chairman of Uno Minda Limited, said the Prime Minister's visit could unlock collaboration across multiple sectors by leveraging the natural strengths of both economies. He pointed out that Oman's low energy costs

Indian business leaders in Oman express optimism as Prime Minister Modi's visit promises stronger ties and expanded cooperation

combined with India's strong manufacturing ecosystem create a complementary partnership with long-term potential.

From an Indian perspective, Minda noted that Oman-based investors could benefit by looking at India as a preferred manufacturing destination under the government's Make in India initiative. Manufacturing in India offers access to skilled manpower, which is a challenge in Oman, while Oman can play a critical role as a logistics and trading hub connecting the region, including the UAE, he explained. He added that such collaboration would help integrate supply chains and enhance regional trade efficiency.

Echoing similar sentiments, Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited, said the Prime Minister's visit would further strengthen the already close relationship between India and Oman.

India's Fish Production Surges 38% Under PMMSY Scheme

NEW DELHI

India's fish production has surged from 141.60 lakh tonnes in 2019-20 to around 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, registering an increase of 38 per cent since the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in 2020, the Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying Minister Rajeev Ranjan Singh stated that this growth has been mainly driven by the expansion of inland aquaculture, marine fishery development, strengthening the value-chain infrastructure, and policy interventions under the PMMSY scheme.

India's fish and fishery product exports currently stand at Rs 62,408.45 crore, reflecting strong sectoral performance. Since the implementation of the PMMSY in 2020-21, export earnings have risen by about 33.7 per cent, increasing from Rs 46,662.85 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 62,408.45 crore

MLFF TOLLING REVOLUTION

in 2024-25, he added.

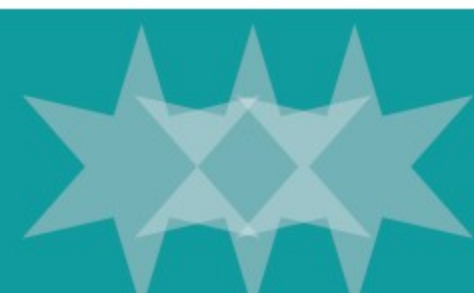
India's average aquaculture productivity has increased to approximately 4.7 tonnes per hectare by early 2025, from around 3 tonnes per hectare before the launch of the PMMSY, and the top-5 states in inland fish production are Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Odisha, wherein Bihar stands at 4th position, the minister said.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) of the fisheries sector during 2023-24 has been reported to be Rs 3,68,124 crore in comparison to Rs 2,12,087 crore during 2018-19. The share of the fisheries sector in the GVA of the agriculture sector has increased from 7 per cent in 2018-19 to 7.55 per cent in 2023-24. The Centre is focusing on the areas in fisheries technology, aquaculture, and value addition by supporting a basket of interventions along the fisheries value chain including quality fish production, expansion, diversification and intensification of aquaculture, promotion of export oriented species.

MLFF TOLLING REVOLUTION

once operational, the MLFF system will help prevent toll revenue leakage, improve transparency and ensure smoother traffic movement. The technology-driven approach is also expected to reduce travel time, lower fuel consumption and cut vehicular emissions caused by idling and congestion at toll plazas.

Replying to supplementary questions, the minister highlighted that AI will be at the core of the new tolling mechanism. He said commuters will no longer have to wait at toll booths, which would not only enhance convenience but also lead to significant fuel savings.



THE CAUSES BEHIND THE ACCUMULATION

Several factors contribute to the relentless growth of space junk. The increasing commercialization of space has led to a surge in satellite launches, with companies deploying massive constellations of small satellites for communications, Earth observation, and internet services. SpaceX's Starlink constellation alone plans to deploy tens of thousands of satellites, while other companies pursue similar ambitious projects. While these satellites provide valuable services, they also add to the crowded orbital environment.

Accidental collisions and deliberate destructive events have created massive clouds of debris. The 2009 collision between the operational Iridium

33 satellite and the defunct Russian Cosmos 2251 satellite generated over 2,000 trackable fragments and countless smaller pieces. Anti-satellite weapon tests have proven equally devastating. China's 2007 test, which destroyed one of its own weather satellites, created more than 3,000 pieces of trackable debris that will remain in orbit for decades or even centuries.

Explosions of aging satellites and rocket stages also contribute significantly to the debris population.

Old spacecraft often contain residual fuel or pressurized components that can explode years after their missions end, scattering debris across wide orbital regions.

Increasing Space Junk: A Growing Concern for Earth's Orbit

The night sky has long captivated humanity with its twinkling stars and celestial wonders, but a hidden threat lurks in the darkness above us. Space junk, also known as orbital debris, is accumulating at an alarming rate, creating a mounting crisis that threatens our ability to safely operate satellites, conduct space missions, and maintain crucial infrastructure that modern society depends upon. As we venture further into the space age, the problem of orbital debris has transformed from a minor nuisance into one of the most pressing challenges facing the space industry and humanity's future in space.



THE GROWING PROBLEM OF ORBITAL DEBRIS

Space junk encompasses any human-made object orbiting Earth that no longer serves a useful purpose. This includes defunct satellites, spent rocket stages, fragments from satellite collisions, paint flecks, and even tools accidentally dropped by astronauts during spacewalks.

What makes this debris particularly dangerous is not just its quantity, but its velocity. Objects in low Earth orbit travel at approximately 28,000 kilometers per hour, meaning even a tiny piece of debris the size of a marble possesses enough kinetic energy to damage

or destroy an operational spacecraft.

Currently, space-tracking networks monitor approximately 36,000 pieces of debris larger than 10 centimeters in diameter. However, experts estimate that there are over 130 million pieces of debris smaller than one centimeter, and around one million pieces between one and ten centimeters. These smaller fragments are largely untrackable but remain extremely hazardous.

The sheer volume of debris has grown exponentially since the space age began in 1957, with the problem accelerating dramatically in recent decades.

The Kessler Syndrome: A Cascade of Destruction

The most alarming aspect of space debris is the potential for a catastrophic chain reaction known as Kessler Syndrome, named after NASA scientist Donald Kessler who first described the phenomenon in 1978. This scenario occurs when the density of objects in orbit reaches a critical threshold where collisions between objects create additional debris, which in turn causes more collisions in an unstoppable cascade effect.

If Kessler Syndrome were to occur, certain orbital regions could become completely unusable for generations. This would not merely be an inconvenience but a disaster with profound implications for modern civilization. The loss of satellite capabilities would cripple GPS navigation systems, weather forecasting, telecommunications.



Real-World Consequences and Near Misses

The threat posed by space junk is not merely theoretical. The International Space Station regularly performs collision avoidance maneuvers to dodge debris, with astronauts occasionally taking shelter in evacuation vehicles when potential impacts cannot be avoided. In 2021, the ISS crew was awakened by alarms and had to shelter in place when a debris field from a Russian anti-satellite test passed dangerously close to the station.

Satellites face constant bombardment from smaller debris particles. Solar panels and optical systems suffer degradation from impacts with paint flecks and tiny fragments. The Hubble Space Telescope, despite orbiting in a relatively clean region of space, shows pockmarks from micrometeorite and debris impacts on its surfaces.

Mitigation Strategies and Current Efforts



Recognizing the severity of the space junk problem, the international space community has developed guidelines and technologies aimed at mitigating debris creation. The Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee, comprising major space agencies worldwide, has established guidelines for spacecraft design and mission planning to minimize debris generation.

One key principle is the 25-year rule, which requires that satellites and rocket stages in low Earth orbit either deorbit or move to a graveyard orbit within 25 years after the end of their operational lives. Many modern satellites are now equipped with propulsion systems specifically designed to execute end-of-life deorbit maneuvers, ensuring they burn up in Earth's atmosphere rather than becoming

long-term debris. Rocket stages are being redesigned to avoid creating debris. Venting residual propellants, passivating batteries, and designing stages that naturally decay from orbit more quickly are becoming standard practices. Some launch providers have developed technologies to deorbit upper stages immediately after satellite deployment rather than leaving them in orbit. Improved tracking capabilities help satellite operators avoid potential collisions. The U.S. Space Surveillance Network and similar systems operated by other nations track thousands of objects and provide collision warnings when spacecraft and debris trajectories intersect. Advanced radar and optical systems are being deployed to detect and track smaller debris objects, improving our understanding of the orbital environment.

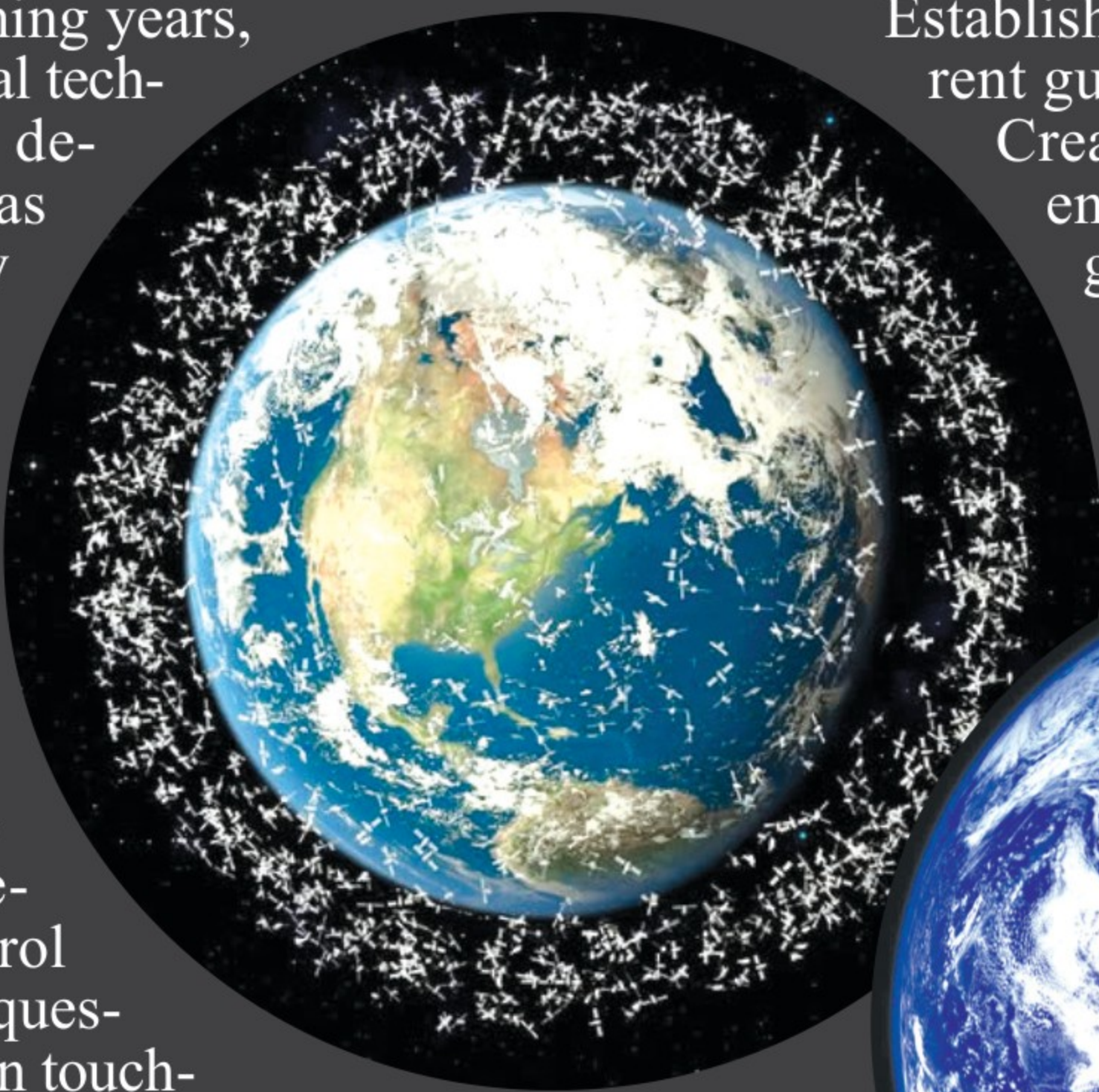
TACKLING THE SPACE JUNK THREAT

The growing danger of space junk has pushed global space agencies to act. International guidelines now focus on reducing debris during and after missions. A key rule requires satellites and rocket stages in low Earth orbit to leave orbit within 25 years of retirement. New satellites use built-in propulsion to safely burn up in Earth's atmosphere. Rocket stages are redesigned to prevent explosions and decay faster. Launch providers are also deorbiting upper stages immediately. Better tracking systems help operators avoid collisions, making Earth's orbit safer for future missions.

Active Debris Removal: The Next Frontier

While prevention is crucial, many experts agree that active debris removal will be necessary to address the existing debris population. Several innovative approaches are under development. These include spacecraft equipped with robotic arms or nets to capture defunct satellites, harpoon systems to snag tumbling objects, and even laser systems that could alter debris trajectories or ablate material to accelerate orbital decay. The European Space Agency's Clear-Space-1 mission, scheduled for the coming years, aims to demonstrate active debris removal technology by capturing and deorbiting a defunct satellite. Japan's space agency has tested electromagnetic tether technology designed to slow down debris objects and cause them to reenter the atmosphere.

These pioneering missions could pave the way for commercial debris removal services. However, active debris removal faces significant technical, legal, and economic challenges. Capturing tumbling, uncooperative objects traveling at orbital velocities requires sophisticated guidance and control systems. International space law raises questions about sovereignty and liability when touching or removing objects belonging to other nations.



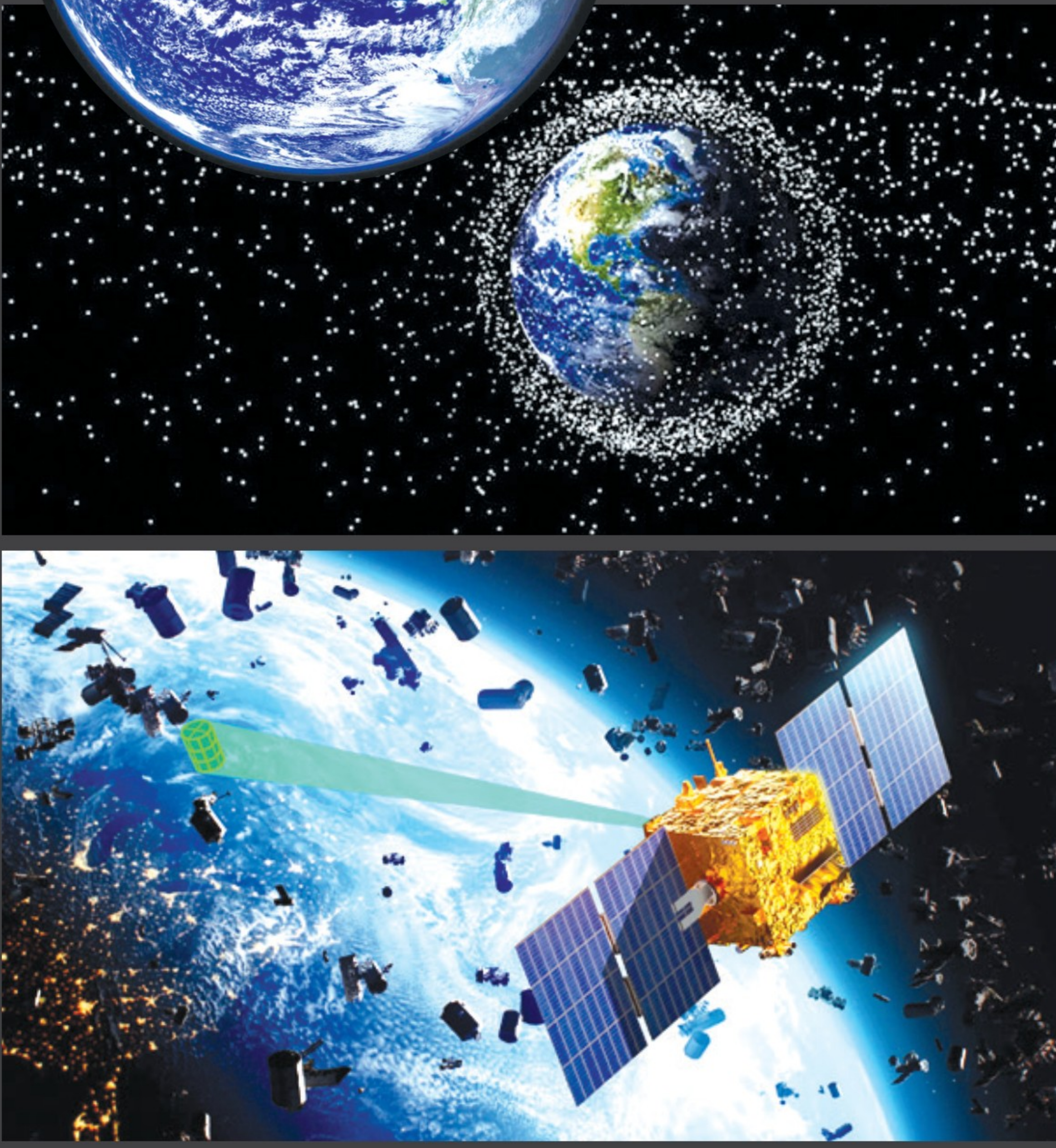
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND POLICY CHALLENGES

Addressing space debris requires unprecedented international cooperation. Space is a global commons, and debris created by one nation affects all spacefaring countries. However, coordinating policies and enforcement mechanisms across sovereign nations presents formidable challenges.

Some countries prioritize national security concerns over debris mitigation, as evidenced by continued anti-satellite weapon testing despite the known debris consequences.

Establishing binding international regulations remains elusive. Current guidelines are voluntary and lack enforcement mechanisms. Creating a framework similar to international maritime law or environmental treaties for space would require complex negotiations and political will that has so far proven difficult to muster. Questions of verification, compliance, and consequences for violations must be addressed.

The commercial space industry's rapid growth adds another layer of complexity. Private companies launching satellite constellations must balance profit motives with responsible space stewardship. Regulatory frameworks struggle to keep pace with the accelerating commercialization of space, leaving gaps in oversight and accountability.



The Path Forward

The space junk crisis demands urgent action. The window for preventing Kessler Syndrome may be closing, and the consequences of inaction grow more severe with each passing year. A multi-faceted approach combining prevention, tracking improvements, active removal, and international cooperation offers the best path forward.

Continued innovation in satellite design, propulsion systems, and materials science can help create spacecraft that minimize debris creation and facilitate end-of-life disposal. Investment in debris tracking and characterization systems will improve our understanding of the orbital environment and enable better collision avoidance. Supporting active debris removal technology development could provide the tools needed to clean up the most dangerous existing debris.

Perhaps most importantly, the international community must recognize space debris as a shared challenge requiring collective action. Just as humanity came together to address the ozone layer depletion and other global environmental threats, addressing space junk will require setting aside narrow interests in favor of preserving space for future generations. The increasing accumulation of space junk represents more than a technical challenge. It is a test of humanity's ability to act responsibly as we expand beyond Earth. Our success or failure in addressing orbital debris will determine whether space remains accessible for scientific discovery, technological innovation, and the countless benefits satellites provide to life on Earth. The time to act is now, before the problem spirals beyond our ability to control it.



KNICKS CLAIM NBA CUP WITH STUNNING RALLY

Anunoby scores 28, Brunson MVP as Knicks rally late, secure thrilling victory

LAS VEGAS

The New York Knicks finally have a reason to celebrate after decades, the team captured the NBA Cup by defeating the San Antonio Spurs 124-113 in a thrilling showdown.

OG Anunoby led the charge with 28 points, while Jalen Brunson added 25, earning the tournament's Most Valuable Player award. The Knicks overcame a late deficit, turning a tight game into a memorable victory. "This is

great and we're going to enjoy this," Brunson said. "But once we leave tomorrow, we're moving on."

Coach Mike Brown praised his team's resilience. "Every game counts in a single-elimination tournament," he said. "Success builds confidence for everyone in the organization." Karl-Anthony Towns contributed 16 points and 11 rebounds despite dealing with a calf injury, exiting briefly in the third quarter but returning later to help seal the win.

The Spurs were led by Dylan Harper, who scored 21 points, Victor Wembanyama with 18, and De'Aaron Fox with 16. Wembanyama left the postgame press conference early, citing a personal loss. Despite their effort, San Antonio could not stop New York's dominance inside the paint. Mitchell Robinson pulled down 15 rebounds, 10 on offense, giving the Knicks a 56-44 points-in-the-paint advantage.

A key 13-1 run late in the

third quarter allowed New York to take a 100-95 lead, a margin they never gave up. Beyond glory, each Knicks player earned an extra \$318,560 for winning, bringing the total prize to \$530,933.

While this victory doesn't affect regular season standings, both teams remain atop their divisions at 18-7. For the Knicks, it's a strong sign of hope for the Eastern Conference and perhaps, a glimpse of championship glory ahead.

Coe frustrated as dopers evade legal punishment

LONDON

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe expressed frustration over the legal hurdles that prevent authorities from stripping banned athletes of world records, highlighting the limits of anti-doping enforcement.

Kenyan marathoner Ruth Chepngetich's astonishing two hours, nine minutes and 56 seconds performance in Chicago last October remains the legal world record, even though she received a three-year doping ban earlier this year. Only results after March have been voided, leaving her record intact.

"I share your frustration, but I'm not a lawyer," Coe told journalists. "Legal challenges mean the burden of proof must be a positive test at the time of the performance. Without that, it's extremely difficult to act."

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) continues to investigate Chepngetich for other possi-

ble violations, while Coe emphasized the importance of smarter testing. "We have to focus on intelligent testing, using AI to allocate resources where it matters most," he said.

High-profile suspensions in 2025 also included American sprinters Marvin Bracy, Erryon Knighton, and Fred Kerley. AIU chairman David Howman warned that elite dopers are evading detection, hurting the credibility of anti-doping efforts.

Despite the challenges, Coe highlighted the sport's growth. This year's World Championships in Tokyo saw 84 nations reach a final, up from 47 in 1991, showcasing emerging talent across disciplines.

Looking ahead, Coe promoted the inaugural Ultimate Championships in Budapest next September, a one-week-end event featuring the world's best athletes competing for a historic \$10 million prize.

Brazile sparks Arkansas to big win

FAYETTEVILLE

Trevon Brazile scored a career-high 26 points to lead No. 14 Arkansas to a 108-80 victory over Queens, as the Razorbacks cruised to their fourth straight win.

Brazile shot an impressive 9-of-11 from the field, including 5-of-7 from beyond the arc. He also added 18 points in the first half, helping Arkansas take a 24-point lead into halftime. Darius Acuff Jr. contributed 23 points and 10 assists, scoring 16 in the opening 20 minutes.

The Razorbacks shot 60% in the first half and dominated in transition, outscoring Queens 32-14 on fast-break points. Arkansas finished the game 14 of 28 from three-point range, while the Royals managed just 6 of 25.

Queens struggled offensively, with Atlantic Sun preseason player of the year Chris Ashby limited to only two points on 1-of-9 shooting, including 0-for-7 from three-point range. Nasir Mann led the Royals with 16 points.

Four other Arkansas players joined Brazile and Acuff in double figures. Billy Richmond III scored 15 points off the bench, Nick Pringle added 14, Karter Knox had 11, and D.J. Wagner contributed 10.

The Razorbacks have now bounced back strongly after an early-season loss to then-No. 4 Duke on Thanksgiving. Arkansas' balanced scoring and efficient shooting proved too much for Queens, demonstrating why they are ranked among the nation's top teams.



MacKinnon powers Avalanche past struggling Kraken

SEATTLE

Nathan MacKinnon led the Colorado Avalanche to a 5-3 win over the Seattle Kraken, scoring twice and adding an assist to extend his NHL-leading goal total to 28 this season.

MacKinnon's performance stretched his point streak to six games, helping the Avalanche secure their third straight victory and earn points in 24 of their last 25 contests. Colorado, with the league's best record, continues to look like a dominant force.

Other Avalanche scorers included Artturi Lehkonen, Samuel Girard, and Brock Nelson. Goalie Mackenzie Blackwood stopped 34 shots to backstop the team.

Seattle's offense came from Chandler Stephenson, Shane Wright, and Jordan Eberle, but the Kraken continue to struggle, losing nine of their last ten games. Philipp Grubauer made 33 saves in a losing effort.

The Kraken appeared to have momentum in the second period, scoring three goals to take a 3-2 lead heading into the third. MacKinnon tied the game early in the final period with a powerful one-timer from the right circle. Less than a minute after a missed Kraken penalty shot, Brock Nelson scored the go-ahead goal. MacKinnon sealed the victory with an empty-net goal in the closing minute.

Lehkonen opened the scoring midway through the first period by deflecting a shot past Grubauer. Despite a valiant effort, the Kraken couldn't overcome Colorado's firepower down the stretch.

The Avalanche will host the Winnipeg Jets on Friday, while Seattle heads to Calgary on Thursday, hoping to snap their losing skid.

MacKinnon's star power and Colorado's consistent play continue to make the Avalanche one of the NHL's most dangerous teams this season.

Proteas Women Smash Records to Seal ODI Series Against Ireland

GQEBERHA

South Africa's women's cricket team smashed records to secure their three-match ODI series against Ireland with a commanding 74-run win. Both sides crossed the 300-run mark in a high-scoring contest that thrilled fans.

The Proteas posted 375/6, their highest total in women's 50-over cricket and 13th best globally. Laura Wolvaardt led the charge with a brilliant 124 runs at the top of the order. In-form all-rounder Sune Luus added 114, while former captain Dane van Niekerk contributed 88, marking her first ODI series in over four years.

"It's always great to win a series with a match to spare," van Niekerk said. "The batting was fantastic. Scoring 370 on this wicket is almost like hitting 400. Wolvaardt led the way, and Sune was incredible in every aspect."



Ireland also broke through 300 for only the fifth time in their history, led by Orla Prendergast's 97 and Amy Hunter's 64. Despite the defeat, captain Gaby Lewis praised her team's effort. "The girls battled hard, and Orla deserved a hundred. We're moving in the right direction and want to finish the tour strongly," she said.

In the bowling department, South Africa's Leah Jones shone with three wickets,

FIFA cuts World Cup tickets after backlash

GENEVA

FIFA has lowered some World Cup ticket prices after fans around the world expressed outrage. Supporters can now get seats for as little as \$60, instead of paying up to \$4,185 for the final.

The decision, announced by FIFA President Gianni Infantino, targets loyal fans traveling to see their national teams. Tickets in this new "Supporter Entry Tier" will go to the teams' national federations, which decide how to distribute them. Each team could get between 400 and 750 of the \$60 seats per match.

FIFA operates across 16 host cities in North America, including 11 NFL stadiums in the United States, plus venues in Canada and Mexico. Officials said the lower prices are

meant to help traveling fans follow their teams. However, fan group Football Supporters Europe called the move a "tactic to appease global criticism" and criticized FIFA for acting without proper consultation.

This World Cup will be the first to feature 48 teams, up from 32, and is expected to generate at least \$10 billion for FIFA. Despite criticism over high prices, the organization said it has already received over 20 million ticket requests.

Fans had reacted angrily last week after seeing initial prices, which ranged from \$140 to \$265 for group-stage games, leaving many loyal



FIFA will use 16 North American cities, including 11 U.S. NFL stadiums, offering lower prices, but critics say it appeases criticism without fan consultation

supporters with no access to affordable tickets. Other issues, including fees on ticket resale platforms and limited access for fans with disabilities, have also drawn concern.

FIFA said it will waive administrative fees for refunds after the July 19 final, signaling a partial response to fan pressure. Critics argue that true inclusion and fair pricing require more concrete action, not just announcements.

The World Cup in North America promises excitement, but for many fans, affordability remains a top concern.

Shiffrin dominates Slalom with record margin

COURCHEVEL

Mikaela Shiffrin is rewriting the record books this Olympic season. The American ski star continues to dominate slalom races, winning by an average of more than 1.5 seconds — a huge margin in competitive skiing.

Shiffrin claimed her 105th World Cup victory, extending her record after several top rivals failed to finish during the night race. She crossed the finish line 1.55 seconds ahead of Switzerland's Camille Rast and 1.71 seconds ahead of Germany's Emma Aicher.

This season, Shiffrin has won the first four slaloms and five in a row including last season's final race. Her victories in Levi, Finland; Gurgl, Austria; and Copper Mountain, Colorado, all featured margins exceeding a full second, with three over 1.5 seconds — averaging 1.5025 seconds this season. "I'm just pushing. I'm not asking questions. Sometimes you just got to take it and roll with it," Shiffrin said.

Rivals struggled on the challenging course. Germany's Lena Duerr went off course, while Lara Coltori of Albania straddled a gate early, ending her podium streak. Wendy Holdener suffered a scary tumble but still finished seventh. Zrinka Ljutic and



Olympic silver medalist Katharina Liensberger both failed to finish midway down.

Austria's Katharina Truppe finished fourth, and American Paula Moltzan moved from ninth to fifth after a strong second run. Shiffrin's 68th World Cup slalom win adds to her Olympic golds in Sochi 2014 and Pyeongchang 2018.

Looking ahead to the February Olympics in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, Shiffrin will be a favorite for multiple medals. She leads the overall World Cup standings with 558 points, followed by Alice Robinson, Rast, and Aicher. Lindsey Vonn, who won a downhill last week at 41, will return soon for downhill and super-G races.

Shiffrin's dominance shows no sign of slowing as the Olympic season intensifies.

Christensen, Rashford secure Barcelona Copa win



MADRID

Barcelona needed late goals from Andreas Christensen and Marcus Rashford to defeat third-division side Guadalajara 2-0 in the Copa del Rey round of 32. The match was delayed by half an hour due to issues with the stadium's temporary grandstand.

Local authorities initially blocked fan access to the new grandstand at Pedro Escartin Stadium in Guadalajara, near Madrid. Long lines formed outside until police allowed supporters to enter. The stadium's capacity increased from about 6,000 to roughly 8,000 with the addition.

Barcelona dominated possession throughout the match but struggled to create clear scoring chances against their lower-tier opponents. Christensen finally broke the deadlock in the 76th minute with a header from Frenkie de Jong's cross.

The ball deflected off a de-

fender before finding the net. Guadalajara had several chances to equalize but could not convert.

Rashford sealed the 2-0 victory with a late breakaway goal in the 90th minute, ensuring Barcelona's place in the next round.

Coach Hansi Flick rested several regular starters ahead of Sunday's La Liga match against third-place Villarreal, keeping key players fresh for league competition. Despite the lower-level opposition, the team showed patience and control, waiting for the right moments to strike.

Barcelona now moves on in the Copa del Rey, while Guadalajara can take pride in holding off one of Spain's top clubs for most of the match. The victory boosts Barcelona's confidence as they prepare for upcoming league challenges, with the team aiming to balance cup ambitions with a strong league campaign.



Carey, Khawaja rescue Australia on day one

Khawaja returns, scores 82 for Australia, survives early dropped catch, eventually dismissed by Will Jacks before tea

ADELAIDE

Australia got off to a strong start in the third Ashes Test as wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey and Usman Khawaja led a fightback at the Adelaide Oval. At stumps on Day 1, the hosts were 326 for 8 after an early batting collapse.

Australia had lost four quick wickets for just 94 runs, but Carey and Khawaja steadied the innings with a 91-run partnership for the fifth wicket. Carey, batting lower down the order, played with composure, hitting crisp boundaries on the leg side to reach 41 by lunch before eventually scoring a brilliant 106. The century marked his third in Test cricket and his first in front of

home fans, a moment he dedicated to his late father, who passed away in September.

Khawaja, returning to the team after Steve Smith was ruled out due to a vestibular issue, contributed a well-made 82. He had a lucky reprieve early when Harry Brook dropped a catch at five runs. Khawaja eventually fell to Will Jacks while attempting a sweep just before tea, adding vital runs to Australia's total.

Earlier, openers Jake Weatherald and Travis Head gave Australia a solid start, though both fell cheaply. Marnus Labuschagne also began well but was dismissed alongside Cameron Green by England's pace spearhead Jofra Archer, who finished with

Brief Scores

Australia 326/8 (Alex Carey 106, Usman Khawaja 82; Jofra Archer 3-29) vs England

figures of 3-29. Other wickets were shared by Carse, Jacks, and Tongue.

Lower down, Mitchell Starc remained unbeaten on 32, providing support to Nathan Lyon as Australia built a respectable total despite England's early breakthroughs. Carey's innings pushed him past Steve Smith as Australia's leading run-scorer in Tests this year, ranking him sixth globally. Australia's fightback set up an exciting contest for Day 2 as England looks to strike early against a resilient home side.

Sridhar joins SL Cricket team coaching staff

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has named R. Sridhar as the new fielding coach for the men's national cricket team, a role he will hold until the ICC Men's T20 World Cup concludes on March 10, 2026.

Sridhar, a BCCI Level 3 certified coach, brings a wealth of international experience. He served as India's fielding coach from 2014 to 2021, guiding the team in over 300 matches, including two ODI and T20 World Cups.

In his new role, Sridhar will focus on improving the team's fielding skills ahead of tours to Pakistan and England, and during preparations for the T20 World Cup.

Speaking on his appointment, Sridhar said, "Sri Lankan players have always shown instinctive brilliance, resilience, and team spirit. My goal is not to impose a system but to create an environment where athleticism, awareness, and pride in the field can grow naturally."

Earlier this year, he led a 10-day specialized fielding camp at Sri Lanka Cricket's National High-Performance Centre. During the camp, he worked with the national team and other squads on drills, skill-focused training, and simulated match situations to mirror real-game conditions.

Sridhar emphasized that fielding improves when players feel connected to the ball, to each other, and to the game moment.



Undefeated Crawford retires after historic boxing career

OMAHA

Boxing star Terence Crawford announced his retirement, closing the chapter on a historic career that saw him dominate the sport across multiple weight divisions.

The 38-year-old Omaha native leaves the ring undefeated with a perfect record of 42 wins, including 31 by knockout. Crawford captured 18 major world titles across five weight classes, cementing his place as one of boxing's all-time greats. Crawford's final victory came in September when he defeated Mexican

leg-ende and Canelo Alvarez to become the undisputed super middleweight world champion. That win made him the first boxer in modern history to hold undisputed titles in three divisions—light welterweight, welterweight, and super middleweight.

"I'm stepping away from competition, not because I'm done fighting, but because I've won a different kind of battle—the one where you walk away on your own terms," Crawford said in a video posted on YouTube.

In a post on X, Crawford wrote: "Walking away as a

Crawford, retired as top pound-for-pound fighter, leaves a legacy of skill, resilience, and sportsmanship, hailed as one of his generation's most fearless, technically gifted boxers

great with nothing else left to prove. I gave this sport every breath I had. Every scar, every triumph, every ounce of my heart. I've made peace with what's next. And now, it's time. Thank you."

Crawford, who was ranked the No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter at the time of his retirement, leaves behind a legacy of skill, resilience, and sportsmanship. Fans and fellow athletes alike praised his achievements, calling him one of the most technically gifted and fearless boxers of his generation.

Though he will no longer compete professionally, Crawford emphasized that this is not a farewell, but the start of a new journey beyond the ring. Boxing now celebrates a champion who ended his career at the very peak of the sport.

Mohun Bagan hit with AFC ban, USD 100,729 fine

KOLKATA

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has handed Mohun Bagan Super Giant a one-season ban from continental competitions and imposed a fine of USD 100,729 (approximately ₹91 lakh) for withdrawing from the 2025–26 AFC Champions League Two. The sanction followed the club's refusal to travel to Iran for a group-stage fixture against Sepahan SC.

In its order (VVC 20251217DC21), the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee ruled that the reigning Indian Super League champions violated Article 5 of the competition regulations, which deals with withdrawal after the group stage has begun. The decision has come at a challenging time for Indian football, which is already facing uncertainty due to delays and instability in the domestic season calendar.

Caruana reflects on Gukesh's challenging 2025 year

NEW DELHI

World No. 3 Fabiano Caruana recently shared his thoughts on reigning world champion D Gukesh, calling 2025 a "tough year" for the 19-year-old Indian chess prodigy. Caruana said Gukesh is "not the clear No. 1 in the world right now," but stressed that such fluctuations are normal for a champion.

Gukesh stunned the chess world last December by defeating Ding Liren, becoming the youngest-ever world champion. Since then, expectations soared, and opponents been

extra motivated to beat him. This year, Gukesh has faced inconsistency. While representing PBG Alaskan Knights at the Global Chess League, he drew against Hikaru Nakamura on the first day, reflecting a year with few tournament wins. He came close at the Tata Masters in Wijk aan Zee but lost the final tie-breaker to fellow Indian grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa.

Caruana highlighted that, despite the challenges, Gukesh is still performing at a top level, unlike Ding Liren during his weaker period. "Maybe next year will be better. I wouldn't be surprised if he comes into very good shape next year," Caruana said.

Looking ahead, Caruana has secured his spot for the Candidates, where he could face Gukesh again. Pragganandhaa is also considered a strong contender, with Caruana noting he has a "realistic chance" at the title.



CSK features wicketkeepers from every decade

NEW DELHI

Former India cricketer Abhinav Mukund has spotted an unusual and interesting trend in Chennai Super Kings' (CSK) squad for IPL 2026. The five-time champions now have one wicketkeeper from every decade of life: teens, 20s, 30s, and 40s.

CSK's squad includes four wicketkeepers: 19-year-old Kartik Sharma, Urvil Patel in his 20s, Sanju Samson in his 30s, and veteran MS Dhoni in his 40s.

The team, which assembled a 25-member squad at the IPL auction held at Abu Dhabi's Etihad Arena, focused heavily on youth. Key picks included Prashant Veer from Uttar Pradesh and Kartik Sharma of Rajasthan, both bought for Rs. 14.20 crores, making them the joint-costliest uncapped players in IPL history.

Mukund described CSK's approach as a "tectonic shift" and called the squad "a very different side." He said, "Earlier, CSK's retentions were based on past success. Now, everything is out of the window. For 2026, it's almost like a 30 per cent investment in wicketkeepers."

He added that the new squad signals a complete reset for the franchise. "Every player coming in now is experiencing this environment for the first time. This doesn't look like the CSK team we're used to seeing. There are no traditional overseas openers or tall fast bowlers from Australia or South Africa. It's a very different CSK side."

Andhra Pradesh rewards star cricketer Shree Charani

AMARAVATI

The Andhra Pradesh government has honored woman cricketer Shree Charani with a cash reward of Rs 2.5 crore for her outstanding performance at the ICC Women's One Day World Cup. The award was personally handed over by Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh at his Undavalli residence.

A native of Kadapa district, Shree Charani has quickly become one of India's brightest stars in international women's cricket. She played a key role in India's historic World Cup win, taking 14 wickets during the tournament and helping the team secure its first-ever ICC Women's Cricket World Cup title on November 2 by defeating South Africa by 52 runs.

Along with the cash prize, the state government has offered her a 500-square-yard residential plot in Visakhapatnam.



Shree Charani has also been assured a Group-I level government job after completing her degree, with formal orders already issued.

The ceremony was attended by Transport and Youth & Sports Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy, Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh Chairman Animini Ravinayudu, Special Chief Secretary (Sports) Ajay Jain, and other senior officials.

This recognition reflects the state's commitment to promoting sporting excellence

and encouraging young women to pursue careers in sports with confidence. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had earlier announced the incentives after meeting the young cricketer. Shree Charani, a left-arm spinner, made her World Cup debut in April and quickly made an impact on the global stage. Her dedication and talent have inspired many, and Andhra Pradesh's generous rewards celebrate not only her individual success but also the rise of women's cricket in India.

Wayne Madsen named Italy T20 World Cup captain

ROME

Wayne Madsen will lead Italy in their first-ever ICC Men's T20 World Cup next year, the Italian Cricket Federation confirmed. He replaces Joe Burns, who will not be part of the squad for the historic tournament.

Burns, who captained Italy during the qualifying campaign in the Netherlands this July, helped secure the nation's first-ever spot at a global cricket tournament. He also represented Italy in the 2024 competitions in Rome and Uganda. The Federation expressed gratitude for his contribution on and off the field.

The Federation said Madsen was chosen after internal evaluations highlighted him as the "most

suitable choice" to lead the team. The official squad for the T20 World Cup has yet to be announced.

Italy opens its World Cup campaign against Bangladesh in Kolkata on February 9. They will also face England, West Indies, and Nepal in Group C.

Before the tournament, Italy will play a historic three-match T20I series against Ireland in Dubai starting January 23. This will be the first time Italy competes in a bilateral series against an ICC Full Member nation, offering both teams a chance to prepare for the World Cup.

The move marks a new chapter for Italian cricket, as the team sets its sights on making a mark on the global stage.



DUBAI

India spinner Varun Chakaravathy reached a career-high rating of 818 points to extend his lead atop the T20I bowling rankings after his third consecutive two-wicket haul in the ongoing five-match series against South Africa.

Chakaravathy picked up two wickets in each of the past two T20Is, boosting his rating by 36 points and giving him a 119-point advantage over second-placed New Zealand seamer Jacob Duffy, who has 699 points. The spinner's consistent performances

have cemented his status as the world's top T20 bowler.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh also moved up four places to 16th following his Player of the Match display in the series' third game. South Africa made gains as well, with Marco Jansen rising 14 spots to 25th, Lungi Ngidi moving up 11 places to 44th, and Ottneil Baartman breaking into the top 100 at 68th.

On the batting front, young India opener Abhishek Sharma maintains his top spot, while Tilak Varma jumped to fourth, giving India two players firmly inside the T20I top five ahead of the 2026 World Cup. South Africa's Aiden Markram (29th) and Quinton de Kock (43rd) also climbed

the rankings after solid performances.

In the all-rounder rankings, Pakistan's Saim Ayub continues to lead despite limited recent action. India's Hardik Pandya (4th), Axar Patel (9th), and Shivam Dube (16th) are also among the top performers.

Meanwhile, in Tests, New Zealand's Devon Conway rose seven spots to 34th in batting, while Duffy climbed 15 places to 48th among bowlers. Australia's Mitchell Starc reached a career-best second place in the Test bowling rankings following Matt Henry's absence.

With both Indian batters and bowlers performing strongly, the team looks well-prepared ahead of upcoming international challenges.